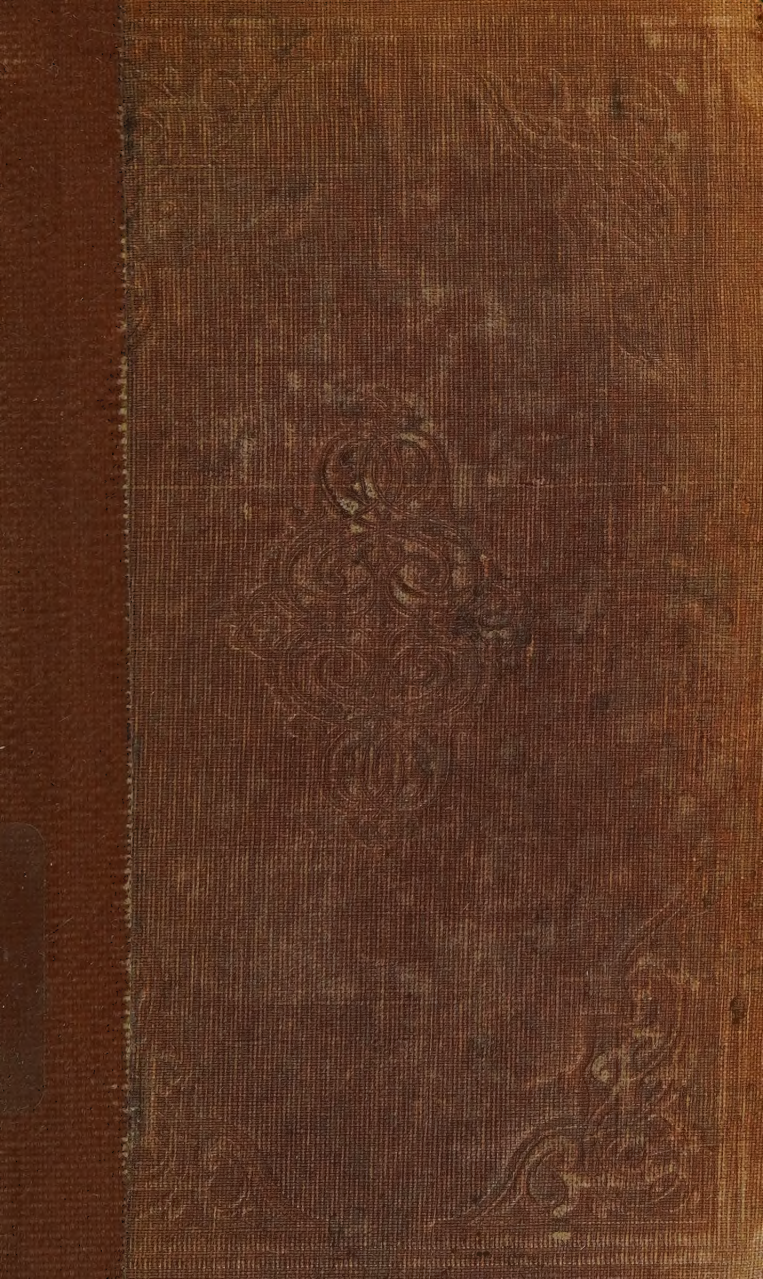




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MAN'S ABILITY:

WITH ITS RELATION TO

GOSPEL DOCTRINE

AND

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY,

SCRIPTURALLY CONSIDERED.

BY THE

REV. JAMES GIBSON, A.M.,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, GLASGOW.

BLACKIE AND SON:

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PREFACE.

THE author of this Volume, small as it is, deems it proper to state, that the original form of the discussion of the subject in hand, was nothing more than a sermon delivered in his turn before the Presbytery of which he is a member, in which he was called to analyze his text in the first instance. The analysis, he humbly conceives, establishes so clearly the doctrine sought to be maintained, and lays so solid a foundation for the superstructure attempted to be reared upon it, that when his design is now somewhat enlarged, the author wishes to retain to this extent its original form. He was not led to wrest his text to bear up a preconceived theory; but was led, in illustrating a passage chosen originally to enable him to discuss a point only glanced at in the Volume, viz., the subject of conscience as a rule of faith and conduct, to see its strong and resistless force in pressing on his own mind the absolute certainty of doc-

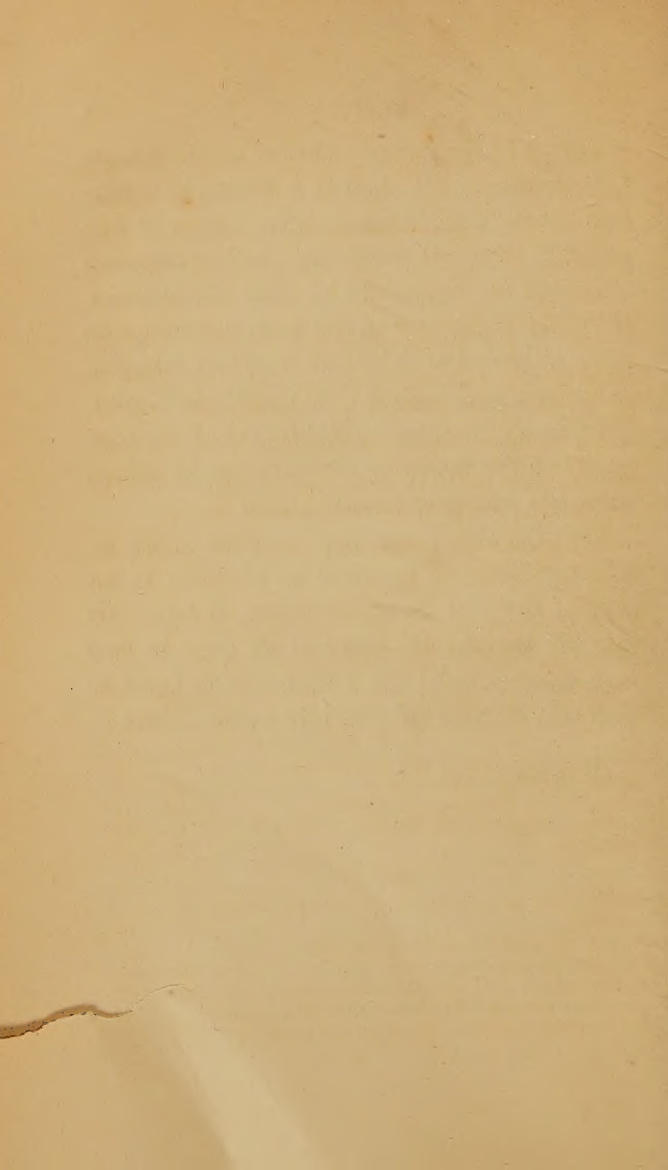
trines of vital moment, now rashly called in question by many, and that, too, in ways well suited to the corrupted heart, and to a superficial age.

The fundamental importance of the subjects discussed in these pages, will not be questioned at any time. Nor can the necessity of studying them at the present moment be denied. The author's fitness for aiding others in this study is another matter. He frankly confesses that after his design was made public, and he viewed it more closely in all its bearings, and reflected on the vast learning and talent expended on the subjects in question by the great writers of other days, he almost shrunk from attempting its fulfilment. He is encouraged to proceed with it only because he thinks it may in part answer the present emergency—at least to readers who have no easy access to, and little time to peruse, more systematic and learned works ; and because he has learned from various quarters, that the slight attempts he had been honoured to make in the pulpit and otherwise, had been instrumental in removing the doubts and confirming the faith of some who heard him. Should it please God to honour this attempt through the medium of the Press even to the same extent, he will feel that he would not have been warranted in failing to make it.

Though he has perfect confidence in the strength and soundness of the views he maintains, he is painfully sensible of many defects in his manner of propounding them, and would only plead in mitigation of censure the distractions of other official duties. He would merely add on this head, that though his views are the result of his own study and reflection, he has been more anxious to be useful than original; and with this view has availed himself of the testimonies of the Reformed Churches, and of eminent Protestant writers of different periods.

The author has a very deep conviction of the solemn importance of the views he advocates to the glory of God, and the eternal welfare of men. He earnestly implores the Spirit of all grace to bless them for these ends; and if his prayer be heard, he shall then feel that verily he hath a great reward.

GLASGOW, 1846.



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INABILITY OF MAN,

BOTH NATURAL AND MORAL,

TO RECEIVE

THE TESTIMONY OF GOD.

CHAP. I.

GENERAL DOCTRINE DEDUCED FROM SCRIPTURE.

IN the epistle of Paul to Titus, i. 15, we have the following words:—"Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled." As this striking text appears to us to have a more extensive bearing on some of the leading doctrines of the gospel, and especially on those which we are now about to consider, than seems generally apprehended, it will be useful to ascertain its real meaning and import.

One of the requisites of an able and faithful minister of Christ, prescribed in this chapter, is that he be one "Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." The

reason assigned by the apostle why this was specially necessary at that time, is given in ver. 10—14 :—

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision : whose mouths must be stopped ; who subvert whole houses, teaching things they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cre-tians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true ; wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith ; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.”

He then, at verse 15, applies a principle, which, even in the use of meats and drinks, for which the Judaizers contended, as of binding obligation upon Christians, distinguishes between the renewed believer, and the unregenerate unbeliever, with whom he is contrasted. To the former, the use of them may become innocent ; because, out of a willing subjection to God as a renewed man, and with a view to his glory, he still thinks that he is not released from his obligation to obey the ceremonial law of God. But God will yet give him greater light and freedom. The same principle is applied in the epistle to the Romans ; xiv. 1 —9 :—

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things ; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth : for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant ? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up : for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another ; another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord ; and he that regardeth not the

day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

The great actuating principle of all believers is, that in all they do in life or at death, it is done to the Lord. This is their end and aim; and the eating or not eating of certain meats cannot vitiate it to them. For meats commend not to God—for neither if they eat are they the better; nor if they eat not are they the worse. "But to the unbelieving and defiled" there is no such reigning and ruling principle or motive. He lives to himself and dies to himself. There is neither love nor fear of God before his eyes; and whatever he does is stained with the pollution of a selfish alienated heart, a heart which is at enmity with God, "not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." *Nothing* is pure to *him*. "His mind and conscience is defiled." The very intellectual judgments of his mind, and moral determinations of his conscience, at least in all things respecting God, are perverted and impure. He is incapable of any thing spiritually right; so that when he is professing to be honouring God in insisting on Jewish observances, his profession neither is nor can be true. "They," the unbelieving and defiled, "profess that they SERVE God, but in works they DENY him, being abominable and disobedient," (unpersuadable *απειθοις*) "and to every good work reprobate, unapproved, rejected, as a false metal when the test is applied—unfit for use, as

Schleusner, who cannot be accused of stretching evangelical doctrine too far, explains the word, useless, unfit—not fit for any work—inert as to all endeavour after good. It is the same word that is used, Heb. vi. 8, when it is said of the earth, that it is ‘rejected,’ is unfit for bearing fruit, yielding only ‘briars and thorns, and is nigh unto cursing.’” “Held despicable by its owner, as unfit for cultivation.”—*Bloomfield*.

By the application of this principle, the apostle cuts up by the roots, all the religious pretences of the unbelieving Judaizers in their attempts to enforce Jewish fables and human traditions on the consciences of men.

But the principle laid down by the apostle takes a loftier range, and admits of a wider application; and involves a truth of very solemn import to every human being. It is pregnant with lessons of vast weight to all, and especially of very awful import to the unbelieving and defiled,—to the unrenewed sinner, whatever may be our views as to the cause or mode of his regeneration. The principle is, that the unrenewed man, the unbelieving and defiled, is impure, corrupt in the whole man,—in all his powers and faculties, understanding, conscience, will, affections; and to every good work utterly unfit and incapable. To such a man it is most distinctly declared is *nothing* pure. Even the internal operations of those powers which men deem most free from taint, and in whose powers they place the most implicit trust, “even their mind and conscience, are defiled,” unfit for any one thing that is pleasing to God.

But that we may be sure we are not mistaking the terms of the proposition, let us for a moment advert to their import:—There is nothing about them

at all perplexing or doubtful; and no one who had no other end in view than to ascertain their meaning, could fail to perceive it. The words are distinct and explicit. The "pure" must mean, in the first instance, absolutely pure, in order that the consequence may follow, that *all* things are pure. No qualification of the term is given there, because none is required or intended. So then, if any moral creature is, or was, perfectly pure, the proposition holds without any exception; and exactly in proportion as he is truly and really pure, in the same proportion will all things be pure to *him*. There is nothing of a doubtful or limited kind in these words.

On the other hand, to the defiled and unbelieving; in other words, to the unrenewed man is "nothing pure." Here the declaration is equally explicit and comprehensive. We see nothing in the context warranting an exception; on the contrary, the apostle cuts off the exception where it might be supposed most certainly found. Were it not to be thus understood, the sentiment would be very commonplace, however true, and hardly worthy of so peculiar an announcement of the Spirit of inspiration.

"Even their mind and conscience are defiled." Here there is as little doubtful or limited. Not merely is there a perverse will, which to affirm would be a very bald truism in this connection. But sin hath defiled the very mind and conscience; not the mere will and affections—supposing we adopt the distinction—but the very faculties to which are most exclusively ascribed intellectual judgments and moral determinations. The word *mind* in the Greek is of no doubtful import. It is defined in its original generic meaning by

Schleusner, "The mind, with every sense, thought, and affection, and *all* its faculties," and remarkable enough, as connected with *renovation*, the instance he gives is Rom. xii. 2:—"Be ye renewed, metamorphosed, wholly changed, by the renewing of your *mind*;" and refers to the following passages as illustrations:—Col. iii. 10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE after the image of Him that created him;" knowledge being made the antithesis to "lying," one of the deeds of the old man. 1 Cor. i. 10, "But that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment." Eph. iv. 17, "That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts;" ver. 23, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;" ver. 24, "And that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." In 1 Tim. vi. 5, and in 2 Tim. iii. 8, the phrase "men of corrupt minds" is used; or as it is in the Greek,—men corrupt as to their minds, "reprobate concerning the faith," without judgment or discernment concerning the faith.

The second branch of its import he calls "the intellect, or that *faculty* of the mind by which we know and understand." Under this head he gives a variety of instances, all strictly confined to the understanding:—Luke xxiv. 45, "Then opened he their *understandings* (minds) to understand the Scriptures"—not merely repeated this in their hearing, but *opened their minds* to understand them. Rom.

xiv. 5, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." 1 Cor. xiv. 14, "My understanding is unfruitful"—my mind cannot influence the mind of another by speaking in an unknown tongue. Also ver. 15—19; Phil. iv. 7, "passeth all understanding"—mind, or comprehension. Rev. xiii. 18, "Let him that understandeth"—literally, hath mind or understanding—"count the number of the beast." Comp. Rev. xvii. 9. 3d. He defines it to be the knowledge (*cognitio, scientia*) of anything. Col. ii. 18, "Vanity puffed up of his fleshly mind"—of his vain and empty knowledge. 2 Thess. ii. 2, "That ye be not soon troubled in, or rather of the mind (*απο του νοου*) from your knowledge of what is coming on the world. 4th. The sense, or power of the mind—*ingenium, ratio*—Rom. i. 20, "God gave them over to a reprobate undiscerning mind. 5th. The will, decree or counsel of the mind. Rom. xi. 34, "Who hath known the mind, or purpose of the Lord? 1 Cor. ii. 16. 6th. The last sense assigned by Schleusner is, "The mind which is governed by sound reason, and removed from the depravity of referring all things to the body, the mind amended by the Christian religion." In other words, we say renewed by the Spirit of God. Rom. vii. 23, 25, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my *mind*; 25, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God;"—called (ver. 22.) the "inner man."

These are all the senses, and indeed all the places in which it is employed in the New Testament. And it is worthy of remark, that, while under the first head it comprehends the *whole* inner man, in no one instance is it employed to denote the will or the af-

fections, as such, in contradistinction to the understanding. So that of the mind, thus clearly understood, the Spirit of God says—in the unbelieving and defiled, it, as well as all about him, is defiled. It cannot know, believe, or serve God, till God change it.

There will be less trouble in regard to the “conscience”—*συνηδηνσις*—or as the same lexicographer explains it to mean, the sense and judgment of what is right and wrong in moral actions, commonly called the moral sense; that by which we perceive or distinguish and decide on things moral. It seems occasionally to be used somewhat in the sense of the preceding word, or at least applied to what is the office of the understanding—a simple judgment. It acts the part of a witness and judge, and approves or condemns as the circumstance may be.

Let us observe, then, that in whichever shades of meaning attached to the words “mind” and “conscience,” we understand them to be used in the passage before us, in regard to one and all of them it is here expressly declared, that in one and all of them they are defiled. No exception is stated.

The doctrine, then, we would deduce from this passage is as follows:—To the unbelieving and defiled; in other words, to the unregenerate, the mind and conscience are under an inherent universal incapacity to form a right judgment, and come to a right determination in regard to the things pertaining to God, and *as* pertaining to God; not only that they are in the condition of an eye with a veil before it, while the eye itself is perfect and entire; but in the condition of an eye diseased, weakened, and decayed in its very internal organization, while yet the eye is

there. But while it remains in that state, though it may have some glimmerings of light, yet it is altogether incapable of giving secure or safe direction. It is not, as the Socinians affirmed, "that man endued with understanding is no otherwise blind in the divine mysteries than he who hath eyes, but sits in the dark : remove the darkness and bring him into the light, and he will see. The eyes of a man are his understanding. The light is Christ's doctrine."* But the doctrine of this passage, and, consequently, the fact of the case, is, that the eyes of the man are so seriously injured that they can neither receive nor bear the light, until the great Physician hath healed them. The more bright and glorious the light, the more offensive it is.

If any one object to this doctrine, then we would ask what he means by a defiled understanding? For ourselves, we can form no conception of any other defilement than its weakness or incapacity to good. Does it mean nothing more than that the understanding, to all spiritual effects, is perfect and entire, but is unhappily associated with a depraved will, whose bidding it is under a necessity to perform? That it is in the condition of an inert passive instrument, wielded at the pleasure of the perverted will? And is this, after all, the whole power and office of the boasted reason and understanding of man? Is man's noblest faculty, after all, the menial handmaid, and not the guiding directress of the will? We believe that the very reverse is the case; that

* It is sad to see this language of the old Socinians retailed by the modern writers of the shallow heresies now overspreading our country, in this age of superficial and sentimental theology.

the understanding of the sinner, under false views and judgments, misleads the will and affections. “The devil was a murderer from the beginning ; because he is a liar and the father of it.” The tempter dealt with the understanding or intellectual part first. Deceit belongs to the intellectual part. Transgression follows deceit. The sin was completed in the will. That the “understanding is defiled,” and that the will influences the understanding, are not identical propositions. Both of them may be, and are, perfectly true ; and yet they are not the same thing. Sin once committed under the instigation of the tempter, enmity is introduced into the soul. Enmity produced by terror drives from God ; and there is a wilful shutting out of God from the soul. But not until a sinful desire of forbidden knowledge is kindled by a false promise of some future good—“Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” The effects of falsehood and enmity on the understanding and will are mutual, through the very inherent malignity of sin which destroys all, and in every direction, for any good end, on which its taint doth fall. How it destroys the *understanding*, I may not be able to tell. How it destroys the *will*, I may not be able to tell. But the fact may be made clear. “The *soul* that sinneth it shall *die*.” Sin necessarily separates from God ; and there is a plain enough reason for its universally destructive nature, in the moral government of a holy and sin-hating God. It were strange indeed, if, while punishment fell on the rebel against God, his noblest faculties should escape, and remain pure and entire. Believing in the account which the Scriptures give of God, of the value of his moral government, the fall of man, and the effects of

that fall, it seems most unreasonable to imagine, as the theory of the entireness of man's natural *faculties* must imply, that there is a very important and noble domain in the human soul into which the ravages of sin have not entered; that this domain is perfect and entire in itself, but only liable to be disturbed by the conterminous rebels—the will and affections.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to discuss the whole doctrine of human depravity, as we conceive it is not formally denied by those whose errors we have it more immediately in view to meet in these pages. We adopt, entire, the admirable statement of the Confession of Faith on this subject:—

“I. Our first parents being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

“II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

“III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

“IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

“V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated: and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both

itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

“VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.”

To those who wish to see these principles stated and defended at length, the author earnestly recommends the work of Jonathan Edwards on Original Sin.

We take it for granted, then, that man is depraved—that, at least, his will is averse to all good. And we shall now proceed to inquire if the man so depraved in the will and affections has, nevertheless, natural powers and faculties capable of believing and receiving the truth of God to saving effects; and whether it be the will only which is depraved, and rendered unfit to serve God.

We affirm it is the whole man that is laid under an inability to know, love, and serve God, in the whole powers and faculties of the man. In a word, to man in his unrenewed state, “*all things are defiled, and nothing is pure.*”

By natural powers and faculties, we understand the powers and faculties which man *now* hath as a *sinner*; not those he originally possessed as a creature coming pure from the hand of God. In the former sense, it might be said of the devils, that they have natural powers and faculties capable of receiving the testimony of God. And, in the same sense, may it be said of man. But we apprehend that in no sense, implying spiritual and saving effects, can it be said of the soul at enmity with God, in which it may

not be said of the wicked one, in whom such a soul "lieth." As a creature, man had, or, if you will, has them; as a sinner, he hath lost them, "till one greater" power "restore them." We understand the distinction here stated perfectly well in regard to the phrase, natural religion. But if the distinction be not kept in view, there will be an ambiguity, very much fitted to mislead. If kept in view, both in reading and writing, no great harm will arise from it. Natural religion may either mean the great truths lying at the foundation of all religion, suited to man in a state of innocence, and irrespective of a scheme of redemption; or it may mean the religion of nature—the religion which is discoverable, or which may be observed and practised by fallen human nature. The former is perfectly sufficient for man in a state of innocence; the latter is utterly defective and insufficient for the duty, salvation, or happiness of man as a sinner. So it is in regard to the natural powers and faculties of man as they came from the hand of God. There was not only a perfect adaptation and capacity for, but capability of, receiving divine testimony. But in fallen man, though there may exist a suitableness in the essential nature of the soul to receive the testimony of God, inasmuch as a man hath powers and faculties different from a beast, and to which the testimony of God is duly fitted as a means; and this is what the apostle calls "commending the truth to every man's conscience as in the sight of God;" yet the *ability* of the soul in any of its faculties actually to receive it to holy saving ends, is completely and perfectly deranged and destroyed. It must be so from the facts of the case, unless it be contended that religion has nothing to

do with the exercise of the understanding ; and that it is wholly a thing of the will and affections.

It may be necessary to state, in a few words, what we mean by divine testimony. In a large sense, it might mean all that whereby God makes himself known, or testifies of Christ in relation to himself. In this sense, it would include the testimony given to the true God in his being, perfections, government, and will, in his works of creation and providence. Though it will not be necessary to exclude this testimony in the statement of our general doctrine, as the powers and faculties of men, to any intents and ends that are pleasing to God, and saving to his soul, are as much incapable of receiving this testimony, as the testimony of God in divine revelation ; yet it is the latter we especially mean in the case of the expression—testimony of God. It refers to the whole of divine revelation. “ The whole of divine revelation, however diversified, may be considered as a *testimony* from God to men. It testifies, particularly, concerning God himself, his nature, his perfections, his works, purposes, and dispensations. It testifies concerning man, his nature, his dependence, his obligations, his apostasy, and his actions, both good and bad, and their consequences. It testifies concerning the world and the church, the present and future state of existence, blessings and wrath, life and death, heaven and hell. Now everything thus testified must be considered as addressed to the understanding, the judgment, and the will of man as a free agent, requiring an approbation of what is thus declared to be true and good, and a disapprobation of what is represented to be false and evil.”*

* Williams’s Equity and Sovereignty, Sect. 1, p. 301.

Now what we affirm is, that man, in his present state, hath not powers and faculties capable of receiving this testimony to any holy or saving effects; and that the whole soul, in all its faculties, lies under this inability of nature, till the Holy Spirit create it anew. Indeed, it can hardly be doubted that the curse of the fall hath so fallen on the soul of man, as to introduce into it weakness and disorder in its exercises and judgments, even about matters of common knowledge—"natural, civil, political, and moral." So that it is not only less capable of sustained and continued exertion, but more liable to err. The very ground was cursed for man's sake; and still more must have been all his faculties. Sin is the cause; but feebleness, disorder, and confusion, and in spiritual things, and for spiritual ends, utter inability the effect: and the deeper and longer continued the sin, the more entire and hopeless the issue. It is matter of common observation, that, in prosecuting an inquiry of philosophy or science, the understanding is weakened and perverted through previous misconception, as well as wilful selfish aim or bias. Even in these, the unbelieving man may come to a conclusion which might imply a grave reflection on the truth, wisdom, and goodness of God. Often has he impiously done so—and where then the purity of such a judgment of the understanding?

In regard to the believer or renewed man, if he err in these, as he undoubtedly may, yet he obtains pardon through the grace of God, and through the same grace is preserved from reflecting against God. But we do not believe that error of any kind is either agreeable or indifferent to God. No man can tell the fatal effect of it. We every day see that

through wrong judgments of the intellect in the ordinary providence of God, evils of most tremendous magnitude do come upon men. Is God, then, indifferent to such consequences? No: but such derangements in God's glorious and originally beneficent creation, are the results of sins which He must punish, and the sinner justly bears them.

To the renewed man God extends his mercy through Christ, and God in Christ accepts, and his Spirit sanctifies, the motive, or gives him a truly holy purpose even where the judgment may err, as is plainly the doctrine in Rom. xiv. 1—9; as the *believer* is there represented as doing it to the Lord, whether he eat or whether he eat not, "for whether we live we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord." This is the great actuating motive of his true people: "To the pure, all things are pure. To him that is defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure." God did not make his creature, in innocence, omniscient—neither did he make him "indefectible." Neither of these attributes could belong to a creature. But we believe that so long as he was free from sin, "God would hold him up," from actual error. He made him free from error or blindness in the understanding, though he did not make him capable of knowing all things; even as the Scriptures contain nothing but truth, though they do not contain all truths. The case of our Saviour is an instance: as man he did not know all things; though as God-man he did. But as man he did not err; as God-man he *could* not err. Hence his ability to be a perfect Saviour.

Perhaps this is the proper place to advert to the distinction commonly drawn between the understand-

ing and the will. It is made by philosophers of high note, and for ordinary purposes of discussion and inquiry may be useful and convenient. Both philosophers and divines of high note have questioned and denied the distinction, as to separate faculties of the mind. Whether we may philosophically question it or no, one thing we certainly believe; it has been employed to sanction what we apprehend to be a very fatal doctrinal error, viz. that the understanding is exempt from the effects of the fall, while the will is not; that the former is perfectly fitted without the renewing energy of the Spirit of God to receive the truths of God, while the other is not. This was the opinion of the heathen philosophers, and very generally maintained by the ancient fathers, when they departed from the simplicity of the faith, and entered too much into the wild regions of fancy and speculation. It is strange it should be adopted by others who profess more than ordinary reverence for Scripture, so as that they adopt its apparent literalities even to the extent of absurdity. It is not that those who do so are philosophers; but that philosophers are men. "Some, at present, talk much about the power of the intellectual faculties of our souls, as though they were neither debased, corrupted, unimpaired, nor depraved. All that disadvantage, which has befallen our nature by the entrance of sin, is but in the disorder of the affections, and the inferior sensitive parts of the soul, which are apt to tumultuate and rebel against that pure untainted light which is in the mind. And this they speak of it, without respect unto its renovation by the Holy Spirit; for, if they include that also, they are in their discourses most confused triflers. Indeed, some of them write, as if they had

never designed once to consult with the Scriptures, and others are plainly gone over to the tents of the Pelagians.”* The definition of the will given by Edwards is, “That by which the *mind* chooses anything. The faculty of the will, is that power, or *principle of mind*, by which it is capable of choosing.” There can be no doubt that that great man held that understanding and will in the matter of receiving the divine testimony are one and the same, or at least simultaneously affected. It follows, therefore, it must be so in the rejection of it by the sin which is the cause of its rejection. “From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual understanding consists; viz. that it consists in a sense of the heart of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion that depends upon, and flows from such a sense.” “Spiritual understanding consists in a sense of heart of that spiritual beauty. I say, a sense of heart: for it is not speculation merely, that is concerned in this kind of understanding; *nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this matter.*”†

Many of the ablest theologians of former days denied the distinction of understanding and will altogether. Among others, Witsius says, “Would not every difficulty be removed, and the whole of that controversy that has been raised among divines about

* Owen on the Holy Spirit, chap. iii. sect. 5.

† Edwards on the Religious Affections, part iii. sect. 4.

the subject of faith, be settled, if, as we justly may, we should refuse that there is any real distinction of understanding and will, as well from the soul as from each other? For what is the understanding but the soul understanding and knowing? What else the will but the soul willing and discerning?"*

But "to leave these knots and come to our plain-work," what we contend for is not a distinction in metaphysics, the importance of which we by no means undervalue, but for a very important theological truth, viz., that in the matter of man's corruption the Scripture makes no distinction between the understanding and the will, but holds the *mind*, including both, to be defiled. It is the *man* that is ruined—and it is the man that is created anew. We feel we are amply justified in so interpreting the passage we have been considering, which is our present text. It is the soul, the mind, including understanding, will, affections, all its faculties, which is defiled, to which nothing is pure, that must be the subject of the renewing power of God. "The *soul* that sinneth, it shall die," was the original curse. The actual result hath been "The whole *head* is sick, the whole heart is faint—there is *no* soundness from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head."

If, then, by the assertion, that man has powers and faculties capable of receiving the testimony of God, be meant, that he has such powers to any spiritual, holy, saving effects, and that there is any one portion of the internal domain of the human constitution still entire, so as that without the renewing power of the Holy Ghost, it is capable of receiving the testimony of God, *as* the testimony of God, it is plainly assert-

* Witsius on the Covenants, chap. vii. § iv.

ing that the "*soul*" hath not died—that the "*whole head*" is not sick, and that there *is some* soundness in the fallen sinner. This, we say, is a most fatal error, and interposes between the Spirit of God and man's regeneration, a territory from which the Spirit of God is shut out, and on which fallen man may erect a tower of glory before God ; but which will be as hateful and dishonouring to the God of salvation, as that erected of old on the plains of Shinar. Viewing man as a sinner, and believing in the fall of man, we would deem the notion we are contending against, to be as plainly unphilosophical as it is unscriptural. "The connection of moral and natural evil is as indissoluble, according to the original constitution and cause of things, as any cause and its appropriate effect in the physical world ; and the suspension of the effect in the former case, requires as real a miracle as any supernatural suspension does in the latter. This doctrine the principles of moral science abundantly substantiate ; and the Scriptures, where they speak of grace as a new creation, a new birth, a resurrection, and the like, afford it a striking illustration."*

Though we are aware that questions of much importance depend on the meaning we attach metaphysically to the expressions natural inability and moral inability, yet what we are specially anxious about on the present occasion is, that it is the doctrine of Scripture that there is no part of the human constitution, mind, or conscience, intellect, will, or affections, that can receive the testimony of God *as* the testimony of God, and because it is his testimony, and to any spiritual saving effects.

* Williams on Equity and Sovereignty, chap. ii.

This has been the doctrine of all the reformed churches, as contained in their Confessions, and of the true Catholic church in remoter times, though denied by Pelagians and the apostate church of Rome; though even in her there were distinguished exceptions in the case of men who can hardly be said to have been “of her.” This fact will not authoritatively determine the absolute truth of the doctrine. But it ought at least to make considerate men pause before they rush into the opposite doctrine, or even hover on its confines,* and to take care that they be not seduced by the hope of certain alleged facilities in proclaiming the gospel, to go over to the camp of those who have been alike the subverters of pure morality and orthodox faith. With this view, as well as to leave the reader under no doubt as to what the doctrine we maintain is, we may pause in the prosecution of our Scripture argument, by giving a quotation or two from the Confessions, and from the writings of those who may be supposed to be indices of the opinions, of the reformed churches.

The following passage is from Calvin’s Institutes,† which expresses his own mind and that of Augustine:—
 “And, indeed, I approve of that common sentiment they have taken from Augustine, that *natural* gifts have been *corrupted* in man by sin, but that he has been totally divested of supernatural. For by this latter member of the sentence they understand as well the *light* as the righteousness of faith, which may

* The very able and excellent Halyburton did not think it a small difficulty to propose against the doctrine that justification precedes regeneration, that “the Reformed churches and divines harmoniously teach the contrary.”

† Lib. II. Cognitio Dei Redemptoris.

avail to the obtaining of celestial life and eternal felicity. Therefore, removing himself from the kingdom of God, he was at the same time stript of those spiritual gifts by which he was trained to the hope of eternal life; whence it follows, that he so wandered from the kingdom of God, that whatever things had respect to the blessed life of the soul are extinguished in him, until he recover them by the grace of regeneration; among these are faith, the love of God, charity to our neighbour, the desire of holiness and righteousness, all those things which Christ may restore to us are esteemed adventitious and beyond nature; and so we infer were destroyed; soundness of mind and rectitude of heart were at once taken away; and this is the corruption of natural gifts." And while he goes on to say that there are some remains of intelligence by which man is shown to be a rational creature, and differs from the brutes, and yet *that* light is so overwhelmed with the deep density of ignorance, that it cannot efficaciously get above it; so the will, which is inseparable from the nature of man, hath not perished, but hath been chained by its depraved desires, that it can do nothing right;—he places the understanding and will on the same level of inability in regard to things belonging to the kingdom of God; he conceives it were an error alike fatal, to say, that either the one or the other is exempted from the corruption of the fall. He proceeds to illustrate the doctrine in form, and says further, "Neither, however, do his (man's) endeavours always turn out so vain, that he can do nothing, especially when he directs his mind to those things which are inferior. Moreover, it is not so stupid but that it may have a certain tasting of superior things, though he were ne-

gligently pursuing them, and not with equal power. For when it is carried beyond the bounds of the present life, then chiefly is it at length convinced of its imbecility. Wherefore, that we may the better perceive how far, according to the degrees of its capacity, it may proceed in each, it is worth while to propose to ourselves a distinction. Let this then be the distinction,—that there is one intelligence of earthly things, and another of heavenly. Those I call earthly which do not pertain to God and his kingdom, (government) to true righteousness, to the happiness of the life to come; but have a nearer relation with the present life, and are somehow contained within its limits. Heavenly things I call the pure knowledge of God, the reason (ratio) of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom. In the former class are politics, civil economy, all mechanic arts, and liberal discipline. In the latter are the knowledge of God, and the divine will, and the rule for forming the life according to it." In regard to the former it is conceded that the human understanding can do much, though nothing effectual to their great end. God has mercifully left with him much that is beneficial and meriting our gratitude. There are certain remaining traces of God which distinguish the human race from the brutes. If all that is contended for by those who maintain that man has natural powers and faculties to receive the testimony of God, be that he is not a brute, but is essentially a man with understanding and will, it is hardly worth their while debating it, since it is not denied.

Once more the same great writer says, — "Let us attend for a little to what reason can perceive in regard to the things of the kingdom of God, which may

be reduced to these three, viz., to know God, his paternal grace to man, in which consists our salvation, and the way of life to be formed according to the law of God. Both in the two first, as also indeed in the third, the most ingenious of men are blinder than moles. Indeed I do not deny that some things here and there have been spoken skilfully and appositely by the philosophers, but this always savours of a certain confused (heterogeneous) imagination. Indeed the Lord hath afforded them, as said above, a scanty tasting of his divinity, that they might not stretch their ignorance to impiety; and impelled them to say some things, by the confession of which they are self-convicted, but they so saw what they did see, that by such a glance they were by no means directed to the truth, and did not even reveal it; as he who is wandering in the middle of a field sees a flash of lightning far and wide for a moment; but so evanescently, that before he can move his foot, it is re-absorbed in midnight darkness. . . . To this truth, therefore, the human reason neither approaches nor aims, nor rises, so as to understand what the true God is, or what he wills toward us."

The same opinions on this subject are maintained by all the great continental writers in the reformed churches, who held generally the orthodox faith, and who had not "gone over to the tents" of the Arminians. They were maintained by the great theologians of the reformed in Britain and America, such as Owen, Howe, Charnock, Rutherford, Durham, Halyburton, Edwards, Williams, Fuller, and the like, than whom there are not to be found men of higher Christian character, more acute and subtle intellects, or more enlarged scriptural knowledge. Their views of

regeneration as a divine work extending to the *whole man*, as well as their direct declarations on the point, imply and express this doctrine. Those who wish to be satisfied of the fact may consult Owen on the Spirit, ch. iii. passim; Howe on regeneration, ser. xlii. pp. 894—5, works in one vol.; Charnock—see particularly works, vol. ii. pp. 87, 88. We may quote two passages, one from Turretine and another from Owen. Turretine, Quæstio iv. Locus Decim. De Libero Arbitrio xvii. says, “Fourthly, Because the Scripture everywhere attributes impotency to good, when the imagination of the thoughts of man is said to be evil from his youth and that continually, Gen. vi. 5, of which place we have treated above. Thus Christ says, ‘without me ye can do nothing,’ John xv. 4. He does not say without me ye can do little, or can do any thing with difficulty, he does not say without me ye do nothing, or will do nothing, but ye *can* do nothing; which not only excludes acting, but the power itself. So Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘The natural (animal) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;’ 2 Cor. iii. 5, ‘We are not fit to think any thing of ourselves as of ourselves;’ Rom. viii. 7, ‘The carnal mind is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be;’ Matt. vii. 18, ‘A corrupt tree, as are men by nature, cannot bring forth good fruit: not only does not bear fruit, but cannot bear it, because such as is the cause, so is the effect.’ And Matt. xii. 34, ‘How can ye who are evil speak good?’ so John vi. 44, ‘No one can come to me except the Father draw him.’ But wherefore should the Holy Spirit so often urge that impotency, unless all power to good be taken away, and ascribe the

whole work of salvation and regeneration to divine grace alone?" After meeting some objections, he adds, "XIX. Nor do they succeed better, who pretend that that impotency is *moral*, not *natural*, and that thus the matter is not absolutely and simply impossible to man, but that man could if he would. It is answered—For whether the impotency be moral or natural, concerning which hereafter, it is certain it is insurmountable by man, and in vain is man said to be able to do this or that if he will, *since it is evident he cannot will*; not that he is destitute of the natural power of willing, because thus he differs from the brutes, but because he wants the disposition to will well, concerning which alone were we treating in this question." Owen on the Spirit, chap. iii. sec. 13, says, "That by reason of that vice, corruption, or depravation of the minds of all unregenerate men, which the scripture calls darkness and blindness, they are not able of themselves, by their own reasons and understandings, however exercised and improved, to discern, receive, understand, or believe savingly spiritual things, or the mystery of the gospel, when, and as they are outwardly revealed unto them, without an effectual powerful work of the Holy Spirit, creating, or, by his Almighty power, inducing a new saving light unto them. Let it be supposed that the mind of a man be no way hurt or impaired by any natural defect, such as doth not attend the whole race of mankind, but is personal only and accidental; suppose it grew from contracted habits of vice, or voluntary prejudices; yet upon the proposal of the doctrine and mysteries of the gospel, let it be done by the most skilful masters of the assemblies, with the greatest evidence and demonstration of the truth; it is not able

of itself, spiritually, savingly, to receive, understand, and assent unto them, without the especial aid and assistance and operation of the Holy Spirit to direct us. Will we have, but no freedom to choose that which is spiritually good; though since the fall we have such a free will left, which pertains to the *essential* nature of man, yet we have lost that liberty which belongs to the perfection of human nature, was to exercise acts spiritually good and acceptable to God. Had the faculties been *lost*, Adam had not been capable of a promise or command, and consequently of ever sinning after. In Adam by creation we were possessed of it; in Adam by his corruption we were stript of it; we have not lost the physical but the moral nature of these faculties; not the faculties themselves, but the moral goodness of them." If this were all that modern writers meant by denying man's natural inability to receive the testimony of God, if they only meant that it proceeded from a moral cause, which destroyed the moral goodness and ability of the faculties to any thing good, we would not contend with them. But what we oppose is the doctrine, that man can by his natural faculties so receive the testimony of God as to believe it, preparatory to his regeneration, and before spiritual life is given him by the Spirit of God; such a doctrine is denied by the writers in question, and which is of more importance, is plainly contrary to the word of God.

We shall now give shortly the doctrines of the reformed churches on this subject; and perhaps it may not be unsuitable to introduce them by extracts from the Confessions of the Evangelical churches of the valleys of Piemont. Of these Confessions some are very ancient, though not published till about

the time of the Reformation. That published in 1655 has the following article—" (9) That man, by his transgression, lost that righteousness and holiness which he received, and is thereby obnoxious to the wrath of God, death, and captivity, *under the jurisdiction of him* who has the power of death, that is, the devil; insomuch that our free will is become a servant and a slave to sin; and thus all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are by nature the children of wrath, being all dead in their trespasses and sins, and, consequently, *incapable of the least good motion, or inclination to anything* which concerns their salvation; yea, *incapable to think one good thought without God's special grace*, all their imaginations being wholly evil, and that continually." Correlative with this is their definition of faith, Article 18, "That faith is the gracious and efficacious work of the Holy Spirit, which enlightens our souls and persuades them (literally, *bears them, le porte*) to lean and rest upon the mercy of God, and so thereby to apply unto themselves the merits of Jesus Christ."*

The Helvetic Confession, Article ix, concerning free will and human power, has these words: "We must next consider what man hath been since the fall. The intellect is not indeed taken away from man, neither is he deprived of will, and changed into a stock or a stone; but *these* are so changed and reduced (*imminuta*) in men, that they can no longer do what they could do before the fall. For the intellect is darkened; and the will, from being free, is become a slave. For it serves sin, not unwillingly; but willingly. Although it is not called will, but not-

* Morland's History of the Churches of Piemont, p. 63—65.

will, (*voluntas, non voluntas*). * * *” It proceeds to assert that we cannot think a good thought of ourselves, that it is evident the mind or intellect is the leader of the will; when the blind lead the blind, it is manifest whither the will must tend. The Belgic Confession, Article xiv. speaks the same language. The Synod of Dort, which expressed the mind of many of the protestant churches through their deputies, on the corruption of man, after declaring it, says, Article iv., “There is indeed some remains of the light of nature in man after the fall, by the aid of which he retains certain notices of God, of natural things, of the distinction of honourable and base, and shows some desire of virtue and external order; but so far is it from being the case that by this light of nature he can arrive at any saving knowledge of God, and can turn to him, that he cannot even use that light aright in things natural and civil: nay, whatever it may at length be, he wholly contaminates it in various ways, and imprisons it in unrighteousness, which, while he does, he is rendered unexcusable before God.”

The statement of the Confession of the once noble, and, we trust, yet to be illustrious, churches of France, watered as they so plentifully were with the blood of the saints, is so truly admirable on this point that we cannot withhold it:—

Article IX. “We believe that man, being created pure and upright, and conformable to the image of God, through his own fault fell from that grace which he had received, and thereby did so estrange himself from God, the fountain of all righteousness and of all good things, that his nature is become altogether defiled; and being blind in his understanding and cor-

rupt in his heart, he hath utterly lost that integrity ; and although he can somewhat discern between good and evil, yet we do affirm, that whatsoever light he hath, it straightway becometh darkness, when the question is of seeking after God ; so that by his understanding and reason he can never come to God. And although he be endowed with will, whereby he is moved to this or that, yet forasmuch as that also is in bondage to sin, that he hath no freedom to discern that which is good, but if he have any, it is the gracious gift of God."

Article X. " We believe that all the offspring of Adam are infected with the contagion of original sin ; which is a vice hereditary to us by propagation, and not only by imitation, as the Pelagians asserted, whose errors are detested by us. Nor do we think it necessary to inquire how this sin cometh to be derived from one to another. For it is sufficient that those things which God gave to Adam were not given to him alone, but also to all his posterity ; and therefore we, in his person, being deprived of all those good gifts, are fallen into this poverty and malediction."

Article XI. " We believe that this stain of original sin, is sin indeed ; for it hath that mischievous power in it as to condemn all mankind, even infants that are unborn, as yet in their mother's womb, and God himself doth account such, yea, and that even after baptism, as to the filth thereof, it is always sin," &c.*

We have already seen the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith on the fall of man. It is very distinct and clear on the subject of the depravation both of the understanding and will. Chap.

* Quick's Synodicon, pp. viii. ix.

VI. § II. says :—" By this sin they (our first parents) fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and *wholly* defiled in *all the faculties and parts of soul and body.*"

III. " They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the *same* death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation." In regard to the will this confession is equally explicit. Chap. IX. " God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature,* determined to good or evil."

II. " Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God ; but yet unstably, so that he might fall from it.

III. " Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to do any spiritual good accompanying salvation ; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

We hope the reader will have no difficulty in now understanding what is the doctrine we really maintain, nor in believing that it is the doctrine of the Reformed churches in their purest times. Its nature and importance will be further evinced when we come to treat of its relation to the work of the Holy Spi-

* This, from the whole doctrine of the Confession, has plainly a reference to the essential nature of man as originally created, and not to the nature corrupted by the fall ; a distinction we have already frequently adverted to, and which it is necessary clearly to bear in mind.

rit in the Regeneration of a sinner. Though writers who maintain the opposite opinion, while affirming that those who assert it are very vague and indefinite, do fall into some confusion themselves in reasoning against the denial of the doctrine, that man does still actually possess an understanding and a will, and which is not denied by us; yet we are confident that their own statements imply, and certainly, in the unthinking and “unskilful” in the Word of God, lead to the belief that the intellectual faculties of man are as entire in themselves, and as well fitted to receive the testimony of God to effects in their nature tending to and accompanying salvation, as they were before the fall. That this is the case, seems manifest from the following passage, which, at present, we quote only as proof of the fact, not for the purpose of refuting:—

“Be it borne in mind, then, that when, in regard to what is morally and spiritually good, we ascribe *inability* to men,—we ought to mean, and to be understood as meaning, inability, in its origin and nature, entirely moral—not physical, not intellectual, not natural, but solely moral. In order to just accountableness, three things are evidently indispensable: *means of knowledge and impression; capacity of knowing and being impressed; and power to act according to the knowledge and impression.* These things are clearly necessary to all reasonable responsibility. Without ability to act, there can be no such thing.”*

It is now time we proceed with the Scripture proof of the doctrine deduced from the passage with which we have set out, and which that passage seems very clearly and undeniably to teach; so clearly that if men had a different doctrine to seek, for the first time, they would never look for it there. Is it borne out, then,

* Wardlaw on the Atonement, p. 143.

by other passages of the Word of God? Amply. "John teaches it very beautifully," says Calvin, "when he writes, i. 4, that life was in the beginning in God, and that life was the light of men; this light shone in the *darkness*, and the *darkness* comprehended it not. He indicates, indeed, that the soul of man was irradiated with the brightness of the divine light, that it was never deprived of at least a scanty flame, or at all events a spark of it: but yet by that illumination it did not comprehend God. Why so? Because its force as to the knowledge of God, is mere darkness. For when the Spirit of God calls men darkness, he at once strips them of all power of spiritual intelligence."* Why, indeed, should the extent of meaning here assigned to the word, "darkness," which relates to the understanding, be limited, while it is admitted and held by those who contend for the corruption of men being in the will, or disposition *alone*, that the word "*enmity*," where it is said "the carnal mind is *enmity* against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," is enmity that is equal to entire hostility, or inability to love God? Why not admit similar language applied to the seeing faculty, to mean the same thing as when applied to the willing faculty? Why not admit that sin is so dreadful a thing as to make men twice dead, twice blind, *wandering* stars to whom, if grace prevent not, is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever? The apostle John goes on to say of those who have embraced Christ, ver. 13, "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." As if to say that the man in no respect was capable of that

* Cal. Inst. lib. ii. cap. ii. 19.

sublime wisdom which can receive God, and what is of God, unless it be given him of God. Our Lord therefore said, Mark xvi. 17, when Peter confessed that he was the Christ the Son of the living God, that "flesh and blood had not revealed it unto him, but his Father in heaven." The same truth is positively declared, "no man *can* say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." No man can intellectually receive it as a spiritual truth. If it were merely meant to say, no man will do it, (which is true but not the whole truth,) it were easy to have said it. Again, John iii. 27, when our Lord says, "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven," it relates not to common gifts merely, but to the fact that his commendation of John had been of no avail, and to the reason why the divine testimony is of no avail till the Lord make it effectual by his Spirit.

Can any thing be more conclusive to this effect than the language of Moses, Deut. xxix. 2, "And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land, the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles ; yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." The faculties are here, but they had not obtained power from God to perceive. Whatever be the generic meaning of the word "heart," it is applied in the Old Testament to the knowing faculty as well as the willing or feeling. And in the passage now quoted, this intellectual inability is asserted in the strongest possible terms. Co-relative with this, God promises to give his people an heart to *know* him,

Jer. xxiv. 7. In accordance with this our Lord says, John vi. 44, "no man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." And yet He was the image of the Father, the very effulgence of spiritual light, the brightness of the Father's glory. True it is elsewhere said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." There is no contradiction here, and to quote with such a view is no more applicable than the Socinian mode of disproving the Divinity of our Lord by quoting passages to prove his humanity. The same doctrine is strikingly declared in Isaiah vi. 9—10, compared with John xii. 39—40. It is asserted in Isaiah, first, that they heard, but did not understand; that they saw, but did not perceive; and in John, that they *could* not believe because the Lord had blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; so as that of themselves, spiritual perception became impossible. In this passage of Isaiah it is asserted as plain as words can assert, that there is a sense in which men *hear* and *see*, but do not understand nor perceive. No one will maintain that the hearing and seeing here refer only to the external senses. But that though a man is not an irrational animal, yet by sin he becomes so besotted that he neither *perceives* nor *understands* what God says to him. It was doubtless *because* of sin, from a moral cause, but to an effect on the understanding as well as the disposition, which nothing but divine power could remove. It does not alter the intellectual nature of the fact to say, that the sin, was heinous and long continued. The fact is a fact still, that the intellect may be laid by sin under an inherent inability to perceive the things freely given us of God; and if by sin in its depths, so by sin

in its nature and essence, and if so, why not by the first sin to the extent of its malignity; and he will be a presumptuous man who will limit or pretend to fathom its depths? If what is meant by moral inability, be an inability produced by sin, strengthened by sin, continued by sin, it is not denied that it is moral, and in this sense moral only; but if it be asserted that the cause affects only the will, the mere inclination, it is contradicted alike by Scripture, by experience, and by the reason of the case.

In the second chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle is professedly and formally treating this subject, and he concludes, ver. 14, "The natural man receiveth not the things that be of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

We trust the principle already laid down, and which we do not see admits of question, may be borne in mind in discussing this text, viz. that if it be admitted that *any* degree of wickedness induces intellectual inability in spiritual things, then the *principle* is admitted, that sin does deprave the intellect, and may so do it as to render it incapable of receiving the divine testimony. He will be far gone in the denial of the necessity of the agency of the Spirit of God to convert the soul, who will affirm that it is necessary only in cases of the grossest iniquity. We shall not therefore think it necessary to dispute, whether the "animal man" is a man in the last and highest stages of corruption, or a man simply unrenewed. In either case if our principle be admitted, the argument holds good to all the purposes for which we contend. Let us then for a little attend to the bear-

ing of this text on the present question. The "natural" or animal man, plainly means the unrenewed man in opposition to the spiritual or renewed man; not the grossly wicked in opposition to the less wicked. The grossly wicked, Peter calls "natural brute beasts," by a totally different form of expression in the original. "The things of the Spirit of God" are called in the preceding parts of this chapter, ver. 2, "Jesus Christ and him crucified;" ver. 7, "the wisdom of God," the "wisdom" that had been long "hidden," "the wisdom of God in a mystery," "the things freely given us of God;" ver. 16, "the mind of Christ," "the testimony of God," ver. 1. There are certain things of natural religion to which the mind of man can give a response, and which are suited to the natural conscience, though not to affect it to spiritual, saving ends and effects; but without the power of the Holy Ghost in regard to the things of God, it is said of this, ver. 9, "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those who love him." These are things entirely of divine revelation, and of them it is specially declared, "the natural man" receiveth them not. This is the matter of fact. In no instance does any such man receive them. He rejects them. He is not willing to receive them. But the reason is not merely that he does not love them. That is certain and plainly implied in this fact, his universally and uniformly rejecting them. But there is a farther and a two-fold reason. A farther reason is that the faculty which is concerned in determining on their wisdom, decides them to be folly; not only dislikes them, but dislikes them because they appear to

it "foolishness." They have no suitableness, in its estimation, to God or to man : no suitableness in its apprehension either to the perfections of God, or to the condition of man, and the ends to be accomplished to the glory of God and the salvation of man.

But not only is this declared to be the matter of fact : but it is declared, that as the natural man is now constituted, he cannot do otherwise, "neither can he know them;" not, neither will he as a matter of fact, but, neither *can* he as a matter of ability. He is not able (*οὐ δύναται*), to know them to any purpose for which they should be known, to any spiritual end. Not less strongly is it denied of the natural man, that he *can know* spiritual things, as it is asserted of the carnal mind, it "is enmity to God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither can be." It is not denied that the natural man can intellectually receive spiritual truths as mere propositions that are not false, or spiritual commands, as commands that are not contrary to what is right. But it is denied that they can intellectually receive them as spiritual propositions, and in the perception of their spiritual relations, and to spiritual ends or effects. As for instance the natural man may receive it as a historical fact that Jesus Christ was crucified, and that the command "thou shalt not steal" is a right command ; but it is denied that he can understand their spiritual import in relation to God and his law, so as to have any active power or ability to think and act suitably thereto. This perception is wanting till the Spirit of God give it ; neither can *he* know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Paul accounts for his own knowledge by this fact, "God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit," ver. 10 ; and again ver. 12,

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; *that we may know* the things that are freely given to us of God.”

“Wherefore, between the natural capacity of the mind, and the act of spiritual discerning, there must be an effectual work of the Holy Ghost, enabling it thereunto; 1 John v. 20; 1 Cor. iv. 6.”*

“As the instance foregoing compriseth the reasons why a natural man will never receive the things of the Spirit of God, so the apostle adds a reason why he cannot; and that is taken from the manner whereby alone they may be usefully and savingly received, which they cannot attain unto: because they are spiritually discerned. In this whole chapter he insists on an opposition between a natural and a spiritual man, natural things and spiritual things, natural light and knowledge and spiritual. The natural man he informs us, will, by a natural light, discern natural things. The things of a man knoweth the spirit of a man. And the spiritual man by a spiritual light, received from Jesus Christ, discerneth spiritual things: for none knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God, and he to whom he will reveal them. This ability the apostle denies unto a natural man. And this he proves, (1.) Because it is the work of the Spirit of God, to endow the minds of men with that ability, which there were no need of, in case men had it of themselves by nature. And, (2.) (as he shows plentifully elsewhere) the light itself, whereby alone spiritual things can be spiritually discerned, is wrought, effected, created in us, by an almighty act of the power of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

“From these things premised it is evident, that there is a twofold impotency in the mind of man with respect unto spiritual things; (1.) That which immediately affects the mind, a natural impotency whence it cannot receive them, for want of light in itself. (2.) That which affects the mind by the will and affections, a moral impotency, where-

* Owen on the Spirit, chap. iii. sect. 30.

by it cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, because unalterably it will not; and that because from the unsuitableness of the object unto its will and affections, and the mind by them, they are foolishness unto it.

“There is in unregenerate men a natural impotency, through the immediate depravation of the faculties of the mind, or understanding, whereby a natural man is absolutely unable, without an especial renovation by the Holy Ghost, to discern spiritual things in a saving manner. Neither is this impotency, although absolutely and naturally insuperable, and although it have in it also the nature of a punishment, any excuse or alleviation of the sin of men when they receive not spiritual things, as proposed unto them; for although it be our misery, it is our sin: it is the misery of our persons, and the sin of our natures: as by it there is an inconformity in our minds to the mind of God, it is our sin; as it is a consequent of the corruption of our nature by the fall, it is an effect of sin; and as it exposeth us unto all the ensuing evil of sin and unbelief, it is both the punishment and cause of sin. And no man can plead his sin or fault, as an excuse of another sin in any kind. This impotency is natural; because it consists in the deprivation of the light and power that was originally in the faculties of our minds or understandings, and because it can never be taken away or cured but by an immediate communication of a new spiritual power and ability unto the mind itself by the Holy Ghost in its renovation, so curing the depravation of the faculty itself. And this is consistent with what was before declared, the natural power of the mind to receive spiritual things: for that power respects the natural capacity of the faculties of our minds: this impotency the depravation of them with respect unto spiritual things.

“There is in the minds of unregenerate persons a moral impotency, which is reflected on them greatly from the will and affections, whence the mind never will receive spiritual things; that is, it will always and unchangeably reject and refuse them, and that because of various lusts, corruptions and prejudices invincibly fixed in them, causing them to look on them as foolishness. Hence it will

come to pass that no man shall be judged and perish at the last day merely on the account of his natural impotency.”*

On bringing the examination of 1 Cor. ii. 14, to a close, and glancing at the following passage in the recent work of Dr. Wardlaw, we can hardly express the strange effect of the positive statement it contains. The passage is:—“ I wish this to be clearly understood. I believe and affirm that, in regard to divine truth and spiritual things, there is no inability in man to discern and believe the one, and to receive and enjoy the other, save that which consists in, or arises from, the state of his *moral disposition*,—*the aversion of his will* from that which is holy and good. In a word, that human *inability* is human *unwillingness*—nothing else, nothing less, nothing more.”† Such a declaration in the face of the text—“ The natural man receiveth not the *things of the Spirit of God*, neither can he (neither *is he able*) to know them, because they are spiritually *discerned*,” would, we respectfully suggest, have required something more than inferential reasonings, or the quotation of texts that prove man’s *unwillingness*, but do not deny man’s inability. When it is affirmed that the scriptures mean “nothing else,” “nothing more” than mere want of inclination, when they assert in the strongest terms that language can furnish an inability of *mind*—*intellect*—an inability to *discern*, *discriminate*, it suggests the reflection: Strange, if the sacred writers, under the direction of the Spirit of God, were such imperfect masters of language as to express what

* Owen on the Spirit, chap. iii. sect. 38—41.

† Wardlaw on the Atonement of Christ, p. 144.

they meant in a manner so very like the reverse. But as we intend to notice some of the statements of Dr. Wardlaw in the conclusion of this head, we forbear further remark here.*

One of the texts referred to by Schleusner as illustrative of the generic meaning assigned by him to the word "mind" (*νοῦς*) in the Greek, as being the whole inner man, mind, will, affections, is Eph. iv. 17, 18. As we must make a selection of the numerous passages plainly on the face of them bearing the doctrine of the depravation of all the faculties of fallen man, we select the one now mentioned. In fact, were we to found our argument on any thing short of plain declarations of the word of God, the very phrase, "fallen man," reminds us of the universality of their depravation, as reaching to all that properly constitutes a man, as distinguished from a stock or a stone. It may, however, be of more importance to remind the reader, before we proceed, of two principles which are of essential moment in discussing the evidence which the word of God furnishes on the spiritual condition of mankind. First, that we have already laid down, viz., that if it be admitted that man in the highest stages of guilt may suffer such depravation as to render the understanding incapable of receiving the testimony of God, as the testimony of God, and to spiritual ends or effects; nay, if it be admitted that it

* The author may be permitted to add that his first intention was merely to state his own principles, without any allusion to living authors. But as an intelligent friend suggested, it was expected in a publication of this kind, and in this place, that the statements of an author so deservedly popular and influential as Dr. Wardlaw should be noticed, he has so far altered his original intention.

may thereby be weakened, the principle is admitted (and to deny it is a denial of all experience) that sin may and does affect the understanding so as to render it incapable of, or greatly disabled from, holy spiritual perceptions and acts.

The other principle we deem of great importance to be borne in mind, is that laid down by the apostle, Rom. iii. 20, "For whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth be stopped and all the world become guilty before God."

The meaning of which declaration in the place where it occurs is, that the proofs, condensed from the Old Testament, of man's natural depravity, were not limited in their application to Jews; that they applied to all who had the benefit of a divine revelation; that the truths of Scripture were for all to whom the word of God should come, whether Jew or Gentile; that Jews were no more exempted than heathens; that the end was, that all alike should be held guilty before God, and requiring a free salvation through the righteousness of the Redeemer. Apply this principle to the text in hand, and whatever is predicated in it of the "other Gentiles," is predicated of all natural men. The words are,—“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

This is a very pregnant passage. What is its import? The apostle is addressing the converted Ephesians: he reminds them, ver. 7, that to every one of them, him-

self inclusive, was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, the Holy Spirit, whom Christ, as the ascended and exalted Redeemer, had bestowed. He exhorts them to live and act accordingly; that they be henceforth stedfast in the truth, in union to Christ, and in the appropriate fruits; and contrasts their condition and duty with the condition of those Gentiles, who not having received this glorious "gift of Christ," "walked," or spent the course of their lives, so the word is used in a multitude of places to signify, "in the vanity of their mind," &c.

The word "mind" is the same which is used in Titus i. 15, already explained, the perceptive, directive faculty, according to which we learn and decide, and by whose decisions the volitions are swayed. Of the Gentiles it is said, they "walk in the vanity of their mind." The word "vain," signifies to no purpose, to no good purpose, Matt. xv. 9. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Idols are called "vanities," "lying vanities." Paul says of an idol it is "nothing in the world," a nonentity to any divine purpose. The mind of the Gentiles is as useless and fruitless a nonentity as to any thing good, though yet it exists; just as the "works of darkness," in which there is nothing good, but every thing that is bad, are yet called "unfruitful works of darkness," unfruitful to all good, cannot possibly yield it; so of the natural mind, it is "vain" in all its faculties.

The word "understanding," (*διανοια*) is only a more specific expression of the idea conveyed by the word mind; and we believe, without any question, is understood as meaning the intellect in the various passages of the New Testament in which it is used. It is here

said to be "darkened." Not only is light objectively withdrawn from it; but subjectively in itself it cannot see till divinely illuminated by the "gift of Christ," the Holy Spirit.

The "heart" is very often employed in scripture for the whole inner man, as far as it is a practical principle of operation.* But even admitting it to mean only the will and affections, it is here said to be "blind," that is here, the cause of ignorance, because of its "callousness." That is, that the mind is vanity, the understanding dark, and its ignorance deepened and immovable through the callousness of the heart. The whole "head is sick, the whole heart faint." Grant that this callousness is assigned as the cause of the blindness, the darkness, and the vanity, we feel no inclination to dispute or deny it. We are willing to admit that the cause was moral, but the effect intellectual, and without divine illumination, irremediable. It by no means follows that though it were possible to remove this disinclination without the illumination of the mind, of the intellect, the ruinous effect on the understanding, would be removed as a

* "Mr. McLean thinks I have mistaken the meaning of the term *heart*, in applying it to the disposition and affections of the soul, as distinguished from the understanding, when such phrases as a *heart of stone*, a *heart of flesh*, a *hard and impenitent heart*, a *tender heart*, a *heart to know the Lord*, occur, though they suppose the intellectual faculty, yet there can be no doubt, I should think, of their expressing the state of the will and affections, rather than of the understanding. I have no objection, however, to the account given of the term by Dr. Owen, that it generally denotes the whole soul of man, and all the faculties of it, not absolutely, but as they are all one principle of moral operations, as they all concur in our doing good or evil."—Fuller's Works, vol. III. p. 560.

matter of course. The removal of an active original cause of an evil, does not necessarily either in matter or mind remove the ruinous effect. This is too often taken for granted. Enough for us, it is to vindicate the necessity of the Holy Spirit, to give man ability to receive the testimony of God, as the testimony of God, that it be admitted that, through whatever cause, the mind of man is helplessly depraved.

We do not think it necessary to follow out the illustration of this text as a proof of the alienation of the will and affections from the spiritual life, till renewed by the Spirit of God. This is not denied in the opinions of those we have more immediately in our view to meet.

There are a variety of other texts very distinctly declaring the doctrine which we maintain. But our limited space will not permit their discussion. Those we have selected are singularly clear of matter of doubtful disputation. Some of the others may receive illustration, and our argument confirmation, when we come to the fourth head of our general subject. Meanwhile we shall do nothing more than simply quote some of them. Eph. ii. 1, "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air," "the prince of darkness," "the spirit that now worketh in," energizes, exerts his energies, "in the children of disobedience," or unbelief, (those who repudiate the Christian religion. Schleusner). Until "a stronger than he" drive this prince of darkness out; till the Holy Spirit give light and life, he will sit enthroned in darkness immovable. Hence, of believers, it is said, they are "delivered

from the power," or authority of darkness, called, Acts xxvi. 18, "the power of Satan." Paul was sent to the Gentiles, as an instrument "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Our Lord "opened the understandings" of the disciples "to understand the scriptures." 2 Cor. iv. 3—4, "But if our gospel be hid it is hid to them who are lost, in whom the god of this world," 'the prince of darkness,' "hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." They have entered into his kingdom, and are in spiritual chaos till God say, "Let there be light," and so to this creative agency does Paul ascribe their deliverance, and assigns it as the reason of his preaching Christ to the Corinthians as their servant; ver. 6—7, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." Knowledge is the instrument, the power is of God; Eph. v. 8, "Ye were sometimes," or once, "darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." Strange, indeed, we say again, if this be "nothing else, nothing more," than a disinclination. Rom. viii. 7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

The mutual effects of this darkness, and of this enmity, we cannot stay to illustrate. That they are mutual is not only conceded, but maintained and implied in the doctrine that the whole man is corrupt. We fully believe that

“Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again.”

Such then is what we conceive the scriptural view of the natural and moral inability of man to receive the testimony of God *as the* testimony of God, to his glory and our own spiritual good.

We are aware there are objections made to this doctrine, though they do not appear to us very formidable. Perhaps the most important is that which asserts that this doctrine of inability, as being not *solely* an inability of will (for we know none who maintain that it is not an inability of will as well as understanding, supposing these to be distinct faculties in the human constitution) subverts moral responsibility. As we propose to consider this subject in a separate chapter, I shall pass it over here; merely remarking that we do not see how it can be justly applied to a doctrine, which does not maintain that man's faculties have been *lost*, but only are found ruined by the fall; in other words, by their sin.*

* “It may most convincingly be made out, that all our faculties have suffered a dreadful shock, and are mightily impaired by the entrance of sin, and corruption of our natures thereon ensuing; and particularly our understandings are so far disabled, especially in things pertaining unto God, that we cannot in a due manner perceive, discern, or entertain divine revelations upon their proper evidence, unto the glory of God, and our own advantage, unless our natures are supernaturally renewed. But this notwithstanding, the faculty of assenting to divine testimony is not quite lost, though it is impaired and rendered unfit for performing its proper work in a due manner. I know none who asserts, that any of our faculties were entirely lost by the fall. In renovation our faculties are renewed, but there is no word of implanting new ones. It is certain, unrenewed men, such as Balaam, and others, have had re-

To prevent a prejudice, we would say to the sinner founding a plea of innocence on his inability,—“In the sense in which you urge the plea, and in which, perhaps, it has been put into your lips, there is no truth in it. In the sense in which you plead inability, the only sense in which the plea could be of any avail, you are *not* unable. So far from being unable in any sense, that even palliates your unbelief and impenitence, your inability, rightly interpreted, resolves itself into the strongest mode of expressing your culpability and guilt.” We can adopt these words of Dr. Wardlaw, though with an application different from his. Be-

velations made to them, and did assent to those revelations. Nor is it less clear, that the devils believe and tremble.

Whether men, in a state of nature, whose minds are not renewed, may not so far discern and be affected by the characters and evidences of God impress upon divine revelations, particularly the scriptures, where those evidences shine brightly, as thereby to be obliged, and actually drawn to give some sort of assent unto the testimony of God, I shall not positively determine; though the affirmative seems probable to me. The impress of a Deity is no less evident on the Scriptures than his other works. He has magnified this word above all his name. Besides, I do not see, how the very faculty itself can be thought to remain, if it is not capable of discerning any thing of God, where he gives the most full and convincing evidence of himself, as unquestionably he doth in the scriptures. Nor do I doubt but multitudes of sober persons, trained up within the church, and thereby drawn to a more attentive and less prejudicial perusal of the scripture revelation, do, upon sundry occasions, find their minds affected with the evidence of God in them, and thereby are drawn to assent to them as his Word, though not in a due manner, and that even where they remain strangers unto a work of renovation. And sure I am, if it is so, it will leave the rejecters of the scripture remarkably without excuse.”—Halyburton on Reason of Faith.

cause where the inability is the result of sin, we may say of it as Owen did when men plead conscience for their evil deeds, "to plead conscience is an aggravation of the crime."

This doctrine, as may have been observed from a passage already quoted, is very strongly denied by Dr. Wardlaw. For the reasons then stated, it may be proper to advert to this denial.

And first, as to its amount, we find it expressed in a way not to be misunderstood in the following passage: "Be it borne in mind then, that when, in regard to what is morally and spiritually good, we ascribe *inability* to men, we ought to mean, and to be understood as meaning inability in its origin and nature, entirely moral, not physical, not intellectual, not natural, but solely moral. In order to just accountableness, three things are evidently indispensable: *means of knowledge and impression; capacity of knowing* and being impressed; and power to act according to the knowledge and impression. These things are clearly necessary to all reasonable responsibility. Without ability to know and ability to act, there can be no such thing. Where ability ends, accountableness ends. We are immediately sensible of this, in the case of *infants* and *idiots*. We are instantly alive to the conviction, that, according as there is less and less of natural capacity and power, there is less and less of responsibility; and where *both cease, responsibility is at an end*;"* unless in so far as the loss of the power has been the consequence of the operation of moral causes."

We do not now quote this passage for the purpose of considering the sentiments it expresses on the sub-

* The Italics are those of the author.

ject of responsibility—we have reserved this consideration for another chapter—but for ascertaining what our author means by natural and moral inability. He confines the inability solely to the will. He denies the inability to be natural in the sense of reaching to the intellect. From the use of the words “not intellectual” as well as from the affirmation already quoted, (p. 32,) that the inability is a want of inclination, “nothing else, nothing less, nothing more,” it is plain that this denial of the “natural inability,” is a denial of inability as affecting the intellect, and that in man since the fall. That the inability is *moral* in the sense of involving guilt, we have not denied. But that it is moral in the sense of reaching only the will or inclination, to the exclusion of the intellectual faculties, and their entire depravation as to any thing spiritually good we *have* denied. But this we apprehend is what Dr. Wardlaw affirms, as is evident from the nature of his objections. Let us then very briefly consider them.

First of all, negatively, Dr. Wardlaw does not, so far as we can discover, take up any of the passages usually adduced, such as Tit. i. 15; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. iv. 17, 18, which we have specially considered, and attempt to show that they do not refer to the intellect, but solely to the inclination or disposition. No denial of our doctrine can be satisfactory to any intelligent Christian unless founded on such a showing. But he endeavours to meet the doctrine we affirm to be contained in them, by saying in substance, that when we say of a man of high probity and honour, that he *cannot* do a mean or dishonest thing, we do not deny him the physical power to put forth his hand to steal, &c, but that “what we mean and what we

express, is neither more nor less than the strength of his principle of moral rectitude." Very true, but we mean also that we believe "his principle of rectitude," if it be of the genuine cast, is founded not on mere blind will or disposition, but on the intelligent and scriptural knowledge he has of the claims of God, and the obligations of his law. For our parts we cannot form the conception of a *principle* of rectitude that is not so founded, and into which the views of the understanding do not enter; any other principle of rectitude would have no subjective foundation at all. It would be a blind instinct or impulse. Our author adds, "carry the principle of your estimate to the highest point in the scale; or rather, apply it to Him whom it would be dishonouring to bring into the scale at all, holding, as he does, a place by himself at an elevation above any gradation of ours. We say of God, his own word says it of Him, that he 'cannot lie,' that he cannot do aught that is evil. I again ask, What do we mean? That He has not 'physical power, power, properly so called? No certainly. When we have risen to the elevation of Deity, this description of power has augmented to infinitude." To this extent we may go along with Dr. Wardlaw; but we do not see that it is applicable to a denial of man's intellectual ability to receive "the things of God," to the glory of God. The "cannot," even in this case, is not a pure impossibility of will or disposition, though that is implied. It is an impossibility of nature, including all the perfections of God, by which he not only wills right, but intuitively sees and knows all that is right, and cannot, from a necessity of nature, will or do wrong. In the sentence which follows, there is an obvious fallacy as applicable to the pur-

pose in hand. "There is the power of Him with whom 'nothing is impossible,' and, were it but conceivable, that it should be associated with a principle of malignity or moral pravity, the extent of the evil which it would be capable of effecting, could be measured only by the extent of the existing universe, and by the possibilities of additional creation." The obvious fallacy here is, that it is assumed to be "conceivable," that the moral pravity which is impossible, might exist, and yet the infinite power, or knowledge, might remain. Now in truth both things are equally impossible; and both equally supposable. And if we can suppose that the pravity can exist, we can just as easily suppose the power to cease; and most certainly, if "moral pravity" could exist, infinite power and knowledge not only could, but must, cease. If any argument could be adduced from the supposition of "moral pravity," in the case supposed, it is an argument fatal to the existence of perfect intellect or power.

When our author takes the other side of the case, his argument is not less assailable. He says, in substance, when we say of a habitual liar or swearer, that the one cannot speak without an oath, and the other "cannot speak truth,"—that we do not mean, that their lips are not capable of framing themselves to the words of truth and piety: no, certainly. But we mean not only to express "the strength of the disposition or propensity to evil," but we mean also that he is incapable of spiritually estimating in the understanding the true wickedness of lying and impiety, as sins against God; or of *discerning* the spiritual beauty and obligations of truth and piety in the sight of God. It is the latter, and not the mere common, conversa-

tional, and conventional use of the word "cannot," which is implied from the whole structure of the text and context, when it is declared of the "natural man" that he not only does not receive the things of God, because they are foolishness to him;" but "neither can he (is he able to) know them, *because* they are spiritually discerned."

Pursuing the same line of illustration, Dr. Wardlaw says of Satan, "His fall did not deprive him of power, whether physical or intellectual. It might *diminish* both; but it destroyed neither." Now, what is this in reality, but saying he did not cease to exist—that no one affirms of the intellect, either of Satan or the sinner. But it is here admitted, and in fact cannot be denied, that Satan's fall did affect his intellect—did "diminish" it; and by this admission, the principle is admitted;—and though his intellectual power to do evil is not questioned, yet his intellectual power is diminished; and to do good utterly incapable: and so also in fallen man till God restore it by his Holy Spirit.

We have only time and space to remark on the expression "Evil heart of unbelief," that it simply means an "evil unbelieving heart;" the word "heart" including plainly understanding and will, unless it be contended that truth is not proposed to the understanding as its proper subject.

When the unbeliever is addressed thus: "If you tell me you are *willing*, but not *able*, you tell me what never has been, and never can be;" we can have no great objection to this mode of address, to this extent—simply because the sinner is neither able nor willing; and whenever, through the power of the Spirit of God, he is the one, he is also the other. But

without the Spirit of God, fallen man never has been either the one or the other; and that because of the inherent and dreadful evil of sin in its nature, and as its just punishment. We admit that there are men who wrest this great and deeply humbling truth "to their own destruction," as they do also the other glorious and peculiar doctrines of the gospel,—that there are men who turn it into licentiousness, as they do also the doctrine of a free salvation through the righteousness of the Redeemer; but as of this truth, so of the doctrine in question, we may say: "Do we then make void the law?" do we weaken the foundation of man's responsibility to God through our doctrine? God forbid. We say in all sincerity, yea, we establish it, as we hope to make manifest in its place. Meanwhile, we must take care in this, as in other things, that we do not exalt the creature, and lower the claims of God,—and do despite unto the Spirit of all grace, even for the purpose, as we may suppose, of shutting up the sinner more closely to the faith. For our part, we cannot well see how if the understanding has the ability contended for, it never does successfully resist, never has successfully resisted, and never will successfully resist the will. If will be incontrollably master, and the will itself utterly depraved till God change it, where then, or what is the ability of the natural man's intellect to good? It is a dream!*

* After writing the above, we were greatly struck with the following passage from Elisha Coles:—"Some he found to cry up that excellent creature, man; and the great thing he is able to do: a taking lure! and consequently the more dangerous to such as are not well settled in principles; because of that marvellous aptness that is in nature, to be taken with its own commendation; and to

At page 155, Dr. Wardlaw says, "the principle which I have thus been endeavouring to establish, we find repeatedly and strongly affirmed and sanctioned by the authority of Christ." He then proceeds to quote passages to prove that "unwillingness" is inability. This we do not deny. But it is not *all* the inability; and any passage to prove that the inability does not extend to the intellect—to the whole inner man, neither is, nor we believe can be produced from the whole Bible. To quote passages to prove the inability of will, in order to disprove

fancy itself considerable in procuring its own happiness; as also from the difficulty of taking up our rest in the will of another, whose wisdom and love we are little acquainted with, nor can be, until we are pitched upon it. But, for the present ability of this once excellent creature, we have but verbal report; and must therefore suspend our belief, until they produce some credible evidence for it. If those that assert it have such a talent, it should not be hid in the earth: they should be still turning the penny; and the greatness of their stock should be seen by the richness of their effects. It is no point of honour or prudence to boast of possessions, and all things at will; and yet live at the rate of an underling tenant, who holds his all at the will of another: it is surely a rational thing, that, 'to whom much is given, of him shall the more be required.' It behoves therefore to ponder those serious questions, What singular thing do ye? and, 'What do ye more than others?' that is, What earnings have ye made of those larger talents ye profess to be endowed with? this they should give some tolerable account of, or else they will be thought to boast of a false gift; for it is not words, but performances, must justify abilities, and make out the virtue of principles. Their fellow Christians are, 'of themselves, not sufficient to think:' how then will those answer it, with all their florid endowments, to be found even as they?"—Coles on Sovereignty, Preface, p. 1.

inability of understanding, is, we repeat, just the same in argument as to quote, as the Socinians do, passages to prove the humanity of Christ, in order to disprove his divinity ; while both points are not only admitted, but zealously maintained.

At page 156 it is said, "The bible indeed is uniform in all its representations of this matter. All its appeals, admonitions, invitations, and threatenings, proceed upon the principle for which we contend. They all assume that it is the *will* that is wanting, it is the *disposition* that is in fault, that it is the heart that blinds and perverts the judgment."

This is not admitted to the extent here declared. They may assume that the will is wanting ; but they do not assume that this is all : they propose a remedy for the darkened understanding in the illumination of the Spirit of God, and that by the truth of God ; truth being the proper object of the understanding. Such appeals must, no doubt, be addressed to the active principles of our nature. But truths implying the inability of the intellect are declared in Scripture, and plainly implied in its promises, as we shall hereafter see.

We do not think it necessary, though our space permitted, to discuss this point more minutely in this part of our subject. We think what has been said, has established, on the one hand, the doctrine of inability, natural and moral, in the sense we have explained, and as understood by all competent writers on the subject who maintain it ; and on the other, is sufficient to remove the arguments adduced, by the respected writer now adverted to, in support of its denial. We must reserve its bearing on responsibility for subsequent consideration.

The doctrine against which we have been contending, does, in our view, go a great way to destroy the necessity for the *enlightening* agency of the Holy Spirit. We can understand one who holds it, most honestly believing the necessity of the Spirit's work in conversion; because he believes, as we do, the aversion of the will to be such as to require a divine power to subdue it. But on this theory, if theory we may call it, we cannot understand how this conversion is effected by a subjective illumination of the spiritual understanding; unless the inability lie in the discerning as well as the willing faculty of the mind, we cannot understand such language. The question with us is not what the author honestly believes; but what is true according to the word of God. It is with that alone we are concerned. While we entirely approve of the following passage, yet we do not, on the doctrine that the *disposition alone* is vitiated, see its meaning: "In conversion there is neither the word without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without the word; but the word and the Spirit conjointly, the instrument and the agent. The sinner himself may not be conscious of any influence save that of truth. But this very influence of the truth arises from his discerning its divine excellence, its adaptation to his own felt exigencies, and its worthiness of the God with whom he has to do; and it is by the secret illumination of the Spirit that this discernment is imparted, and that the native enmity of his heart is subdued and slain."*

If the inability be merely in the will, and not natural, not intellectual, then it does seem to us to fol-

* Wardlaw on the Atonement of Christ, pp. 173, 174.

low as a legitimate consequence, that as far as the *illumination* of the Spirit is concerned, nothing more is required than “merely the influence of the word, of *evidence*, and of circumstances operating on the human mind independently of any *efficacious, inward, illuminating, spiritualizing energy*; there is then nothing supernatural in the case,”—nothing beyond, or different from, the ordinary phenomena of the mind as affected by information with its attendant process, or whatever else may contribute to excite attention. We do not see how this can be met on the ground of the inability having respect to the will alone. We can conceive a divine power exerted on the depraved will; but not through the illumination of the mind by a direct act of the Holy Spirit, if the intellectual faculty is no way disabled, and if the inability be wholly in the will. But this fearful heresy involved in the words just quoted, is abundantly met by the Scripture doctrine that the whole man is depraved, and cannot be rendered otherwise but by the subjective work of the Holy Spirit.

Love, and not illumination, is the appropriate opposite of enmity; out of this illumination by the Spirit of God love will spring: so out of darkness or falsehood, enmity. But the whole language of the remedy in the mouths of those who say that the sole inability is in the will, implies that it is also in the faculty of the mind, whose object is light or truth. Any one will see the truth of this observation by perusing that portion of the Reply of the Four Congregational Churches in Glasgow, to the Third Letter of the Congregational Church in Hamilton, to be found at pages 72, 73, of “Correspondence” between

them.* “If enmity against God be not sin, then is there no sin in the universe: and this enmity is the one and only cause of *spiritual blindness*,—the blindness which, we conceive, the Scriptures represent to be the province of the Holy Spirit, in the work of conversion, to remove. To suppose this blindness removed by the word itself, is self-contradictory and absurd. We grant it is by the word that the enmity of the heart is slain, and its place taken by love; but it is by the word as *spiritually discerned*,—and this discernment is by the Spirit’s enlightening influence.” Again we say, love, not light, is the opposite of enmity. The very language of Scripture will not twist into a proof of the theory, that the inability is not intellectual.

On the subject of conscience, in this connection, it is unnecessary to say much. If the preceding reasoning be just, it will follow as matter of course, that the conscience is in the same sense, and to the same extent, “defiled” as the mind—incapable of discharging its office to any spiritual or saving ends until it be enlightened and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. For what is the “conscience,” in the language of Scripture? It is the intellect as employed about our duty and our state—sometimes called the spirit, Rom. viii. 16; the mind, Rom. xiv. 5; thoughts or reasonings, Rom. ii. 15. “It is that faculty of the intellect, by which man, prone to that, is able to judge according to his knowledge, of his state before God, to whom he knows himself to be subject:” God is its Lord. The authority of God is its sanction, the will of God is its rule. The whole

* We allude to this because there is no doubt that this reply is written, as it is subscribed by Dr. Wardlaw.

man being depraved by sin, it shares the defilement and impotence of man's fallen nature to any thing spiritually good, till, by the renewing power of the Spirit of God, the lost image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, is restored to the soul ; and the conscience then discharges its office in unison with the whole man, as the enlightened, freed, renewed servant of the God of salvation,—owning no other master, obeying no other law, and claiming no other rights, and assuming no other authority but the duty and the right to serve and obey God alone, as his revealed will decides and directs. We entirely repudiate all those opinions which would set up conscience as a perfect, independent, or ultimate rule or judge in the breast of fallen man. To give it any such exaltation, is as impious as it is delusive. It is only a shattered remain of man's nobler nature, no more fit for its office, and no more to be trusted, than the shattered mind and frame of the broken down prodigal. Till it share in the renewing energy of the Spirit of God, and be washed from its defilement by the blood of the Son of God, it neither will nor can decide for God on the one hand, nor speak true peace to the sinner on the other. But broken down as it is, it can so far intimate the will of God as to leave man without excuse.

CHAP. II.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN THE SALVATION OF MAN.

SUCH then is the state of man, utterly disabled by sin in all the powers and faculties of soul, body, and spirit, from receiving the testimony of God,—from thinking, feeling, or acting, any thing spiritually good towards God; not only culpably, but helplessly in himself, involved in sin; or, if you will, in culpable helplessness as to any thing spiritually good.

If this be so, it follows, as a consequence, that salvation, initially and throughout, in every step, in its origin and progress, is of God—must begin with God, be carried on by and in God; for in this as well as in every other respect is it true that “of God, and through God, and to God, are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever;” in a word, God is sovereign in the salvation of men, and grace is free and sovereign in its exercise. Indeed, it seems a self-evident proposition; and, but for the corrupt pride of man, could not be questioned—that all that hath being, that all that is good and right, must originate with God. We cannot conceive of it existing or acting without God. Especially must this be true of a creature who is a sinner—absolutely a sinner—nothing but a sinner—enmity to God. It is absolutely impossible, in the nature of the case—that is in the nature of man as a sinner, standing in relation to God as the Holy Creator and Ruler—that any good can originate in the creature. To say that, if it be impossible that a sinner can do any thing that is

pleasing to God, or any thing that tends to his own salvation; and yet that he is guilty in sin, and meriting punishment, is a contradiction, and holding him responsible for an impossibility, is nothing else than equivalent to saying, that sin itself is innocent, and impersonating it, that it is not responsible; for, in so far as the moral nature of man is concerned in the sight of God, it is sin only. To say that the sinner—the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, can think or will any thing spiritually good, is to say not only that a creature can bring a clean thing out of an unclean; but that a thing essentially unclean can cleanse itself—that a thing can change its own essential nature, which is absurd. The Scriptures, therefore, with that consonance with the highest and purest reason which everywhere marks all their announcements, declare in effect of all that concerns the salvation of men, “all things are of God.” He is sovereign in the salvation of men.

Though we were fitter for the task than we painfully feel ourselves to be, the space assigned to ourselves, and the objects contemplated in this little work, would not allow us to discuss formally this vast subject; and though we have entered on it from a different point, and are led into it by a different channel, yet we feel how truly apposite are the opening words of Elisha Coles in his discourse on God’s Sovereignty:—

“This high and tremendous attribute, being an ocean that has neither bank nor bottom, may not lightly be launched into by any, though ever so strongly built and well-manned (much less by so weak a vessel), without a divine compass, and an anchor within the veil. That the Author of this Discourse came into it, was not of choice or design, but of course and emergent necessity. Could

he have found another basis to repose that doctrine upon, which was, at first, his only intended subject, he had not touched upon this: but, apparently to him, no ground would bear the weight of election, but that of Sovereignty; and there it fixed, as on a rock: all the lines of its whole circumference running there, and resting there, as in their centre, where also the Scripture had laid it, Rom. ix. Eph. i. &c. And, however it be a foundation disallowed of men, every observing Christian shall find, that without acknowledging divine Sovereignty, for the original, supreme, and unaccountable disposer of persons and things, he shall want a principal means of supporting his faith, and quieting his understanding, in the course of common providences; much more of those mysterious occurrences, and supernatural truths, which he is eternally concerned about."

We have not been without design in embarking on this ocean. We may not have seen all that was between and a safe landing. But we are assured that, God bringing us safely through, the effect is alike salutary and delightful. We have been in the mighty deep, when its waves up-heaved as liquid mountains. We felt our helplessness in the sides of the ship; we then heard a voice saying in resistless majesty, "Be still and know that I am God." It was when we heard this voice and threw ourselves on God, we found delightful peace, in reposing in the uncontrollable power of Jehovah. Such is the use and comfort of the doctrine of sovereignty. O the blessedness of finding ourselves helplessly in the hands of God!*

Before noticing the sovereignty of God in the salvation of man, it may be proper to lay a foundation for what we have to say, by giving a brief statement on the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty in general.

* Psalm cvii. 25—31.

We may premise that in so doing we shall not, for the sake of seeming to be original, hesitate to avail ourselves of the aid of others who have written on the subject. President Edwards defines it thus :—"The sovereignty of God is his absolute independent right of disposing of all creatures according to his own pleasure." This right God essentially possesses in opposition to all constraint, of any kind, or from any conceivable source ; in opposition to it being under the will of any other, not only being done willingly, or cheerfully, but irrespective of the will of any other ; in opposition to any proper obligation, and altogether independently of any being, law, or limit whatsoever ; a right possessed by no creature ; but essentially belonging to God, and that because he is God ; infinite, almighty, supreme, self-existent, everlasting ; and no other can possibly possess these attributes, or control, limit, interfere with, or exist without Him. That God is sovereign, is evident from the following considerations, which require only to be stated, as they are admitted, we believe, by all who receive the word of God as divine. He is infinite in power, wisdom, and knowledge, as his works of creation and providence, in all their greatness and minuteness do declare. He cannot be resisted, mistaken, or defeated. President Edwards therefore finely says :

"Being thus infinite in understanding and power, he must also be perfectly holy ; for unholiness always argues some defect ; some blindness. Where there is no darkness or delusion, there can be no unholiness. It is impossible that wickedness should consist with infinite light. God being infinite in power and knowledge, he must be self-sufficient and all-sufficient ; therefore it is impossible that he should be under any temptation to do any thing

amiss; for he can have no end in doing it. When any are tempted to do amiss, it is for selfish ends. But how can an all-sufficient Being, who wants nothing, be tempted to do evil for selfish ends? So that God is essentially holy, and nothing is more impossible than that God should do amiss."

God is incomprehensible. The Scriptures often declare this: and though they did not rebuke that presumption of man which would think, speak, or act, as if he could counsel, question, or find fault with Jehovah, its wickedness and absurdity are self-evident. He may condescend to make plain some of his ways; but only because it "seemeth good in his sight," not because the creature has any claim upon him for such condescension.*

God is proprietor of all, as reason teaches and his word most frequently declares.† "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever." Language could not more strikingly declare propriety and sovereignty than is done in these few words, which carry, in their comprehensive simplicity and majesty, the evidence of their divine origin.

God is worthy and alone worthy to be thus Sovereign. There is an infinite fitness in his greatness, excellence, dignity, perfect wisdom, holiness, rectitude that he should be Sovereign, and that nothing should either be above, beyond, or independent of his guidance or control. He therefore challenges it as his essential attribute and right.

* See Job xi. 7; Rom. ix. 20, 33; see his whole dealings with Job; which were fitted and intended to make the creature nothing, and Jehovah every thing.

† Job xi. 1, 11; Deut. x. 14; Rom. xi. 36; Col. i. 16, 17.

"I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."—"He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand.—He is great in counsel, and wonderful in working. His counsel shall stand; and he will do all his pleasure. There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord; whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever; nothing shall be put to it, nor any thing taken from it. He will work, and who shall let it? He is able to dash in pieces the enemy. If men join hand in hand against him, to hinder or oppose his designs, he breaks the bow, he cuts the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire. He kills and he makes alive, he brings down and raises up just as he pleases. Is. xlv. 6, 7. 'That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else: I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.'

"In that he is God, he is able to avenge himself on those who oppose his sovereignty. He is wise of heart, and mighty in strength. Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? He that will contend with God must answer it: and what a poor creature is man to fight against God! Is he able to make his part good with him? Whosoever of God's enemies deals proudly, He will show that he is above them. 'They will be but as the chaff before the whirlwind, and shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume into smoke, they shall consume away.' 'Who would set the briars and thorns against him in battle? He would go through them, he would burn them together,' Is. xxviii. 4."—*Edwards*.

The same writer says:

"It is absurd to suppose that God is *obliged* to keep every creature from sinning, and exposing himself to an adequate punishment. For if so, then it will follow that there can be no such thing as a *moral government* of God over reasonable creatures; and it would be an absurdity for God to give commands; for he himself would be the party bound to see to the performance, and there would be no use of promises or threatenings. But if God may

leave a creature to sin, and to expose himself to punishment, then it is much fitter and better that the matter should be ordered by wisdom, who should justly lie exposed by sin to punishment, and who not : than that it be left to come to pass by confused chance. It is unworthy of the governor of the world to leave things to chance ; it belongs to him to govern all things by wisdom. And as God has *wisdom* to qualify him to be sovereign, so he has *power* also to enable him to execute the determinations of wisdom. And he is essentially and invariably *holy* and *righteous*, and infinitely *good* : whereby he is qualified to govern the world in the best manner."

On these principles, which seem undeniable either in reason or Scripture, this great doctrine of the sovereignty of God is clear. It lies, moreover, at the foundation of God's plan of salvation for guilty sinners. As we are more anxious for clearness and brevity than for originality, we beg to quote the following noble passages from the Westminster Confession of Faith:—

Chap. II.—I. "There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory ; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin ; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him ; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. "God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself ; and is alone in and unto himself all sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, not deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them : he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things ; and hath most sovereign do-

minion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them.

Chap. III.—I. “God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

II. “Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

III. “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

IV. “These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

V. “Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. “As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified,

and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

VII. "The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

VIII. "The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

Chap. V.—I. "God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

II. "Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. "God in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

IV. "The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth

only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

VI. "As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan: whereby it comes to pass, that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others."

These statements are proved by appropriate passages.

As we are at present referring to this high subject of the divine sovereignty, chiefly, if not solely, in its relation to the doctrine of man's entire inability to any thing spiritually good, we must limit our observations to that point. We apprehend that the chief great difficulty in the minds of men lies in imagining that the doctrine as now stated involves the horrid principle, that God by an absolute decree dooms man to sin and consequent perdition by no fault of their own. Most assuredly, whatever may be alleged against the doctrine, the Confession of Faith most carefully guards against any such fearful notion; and has been often shown to be liable to no such consequences. Let it be carefully noted then that the statement of this doctrine now quoted, plainly takes for granted as the foundation of it, that *all* men are in a state of sin, and when God "is pleased to pass by and ordain to wrath" those who are not elected to eternal life, it is "to wrath *for their sin*," and that though the "first fall" did not take place beyond the providence of God, yet it was

in respect to sinful creatures, angels and men, "so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin."

That "there is no unrighteousness with God" we must hold as a first principle. It is beside our present purpose and beyond our limits to enter into the illustration and proof of this truth. But unquestionably any doctrine that could be justly held as charging "unrighteousness" upon God must be false. It is contended, however, that there is nothing in the doctrine of God's sovereignty in the salvation of man, which can be charged with such a consequence. It is demonstrable that man by nature is a sinner, and only a sinner. Let this be admitted, and we have never been able to see why any should murmur against this doctrine of sovereignty; but infinite reason of everlasting rejoicing. Let any one be content to be ignorant of the great, and we think inscrutable mystery, of the origin of moral evil, and salvation by the sovereign grace of God is not only reasonable, but it is difficult to see how it can be otherwise.* With

* On this subject Williams on Equity and Sovereignty is peculiarly able, and, if not entirely satisfactory, as we feel to be the case, yet we doubt if any thing more satisfactory can be written. For ourselves we are perfectly content to believe in the two facts, 1st, That there is sin, and 2d, That God is righteous, both in permitting and punishing it. And whatever difficulty there may be in reconciling these facts, is not peculiar to the doctrine we maintain, but attaches to all other systems we know. In this case contented ignorance is wisdom; and seeking "to be wise above what is written," is supreme folly as well as great presumption. We beg, however, to quote the following passage:—"It may be here observed. If all the opera-

a creature such as man is, and hath been proved to be, salvation cannot possibly originate with him. It is an impossibility. In reference to the equity of the case, the writer, now quoted in the foot note, says, "Now is it conceivable, that mere equity, without the intervention of sovereignty, should both condemn and acquit, punish and release, a guilty and rebellious subject? Or that the subject by some exertion of his own may rise to perfect innocence and obedience. If tions of God, relative to 'a moral system, must proceed either from Equity or Sovereignty, and if the operations of the latter be only those of beneficence, as before explained and proved; it follows, that the former alone has operation in reference to the defection and crimes of moral subjects, as well as in their punishment. Was any *sin*, or any proper *cause* of sin, in man or angel, from sovereign will, appointment, or causation? Impossible. We might as well ask, is darkness from the light, enmity from love, folly from wisdom, or weakness from power? Was it then from equity, as an *impelling cause*, or as any proper *cause*, that apostasy entered into the moral system, and crimes are continued from age to age? Equally impossible. For this would involve the absurd consequences, that equity and injustice are the same, and that sin, rebellion, and anarchy, are good things. We are then argumentatively constrained to conclude, that the *cause* of defection in the moral system is not in or from the supreme governor, but in the subject. But has the subject any principle, source, or cause, which he has not *received* from his Creator? Most assuredly he has, as sure as he is the subject of limitation, defectibility, or any want of independence and all-sufficiency, or any other negative relation. The proper *cause* of defection, and every sin in the universe, is a *negative principle*, essentially *related* to the subject of moral government; and related, indeed, to every creature that exists, or possibly can exist. And it is the glory of God, his eternal dignity and pre-eminence, that no being but himself can be destitute of this negative principle."—Williams on Equity and Sovereignty, pp. 268, 269.

left to his freedom when in a state of perfection he fell, where is there a ground, a principle, a possibility, in the nature of things, of his recovery to his primitive condition, without a sovereign interposition and assistance? If his capacity, his freedom, and the most engaging means, were not adequate to *preserve* him in a state of *active goodness*, or did not so in fact, what basis of hope is left, according to the operations of justice, that he will *recover* himself from guilt, disorder, and misery.”*

Man then is utterly disabled to any thing spiritually good, while yet he is most righteously an heir of wrath. This is true of all men, of the whole human race. Will any one then assert that he can save himself, or murmur at the sovereignty of God in saving him? The apostle meets the case when he asks, Rom. ix. 21, “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?” Let us notice the circumstances in which this question arises.

In the beginning of the chapter the apostle proceeds to prove that in declaring the rejection of the Jews, he was not rendering void the word of God, which promised blessings to Israel; as the whole spirit of that word indicated that they were not all Israel, who are of Israel, and that those only who were spiritually Israelites should inherit the promises of grace and favour. This appears not merely from many general declarations of scripture, but from the specific transactions which the word of God records, ver. 7, “Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these

* Williams on Equity and Sovereignty.

are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come and Sarah shall have a son."

These words are very nearly the express terms, and they convey the exact spirit of some passages of the Old Testament, which record the transactions to which they allude, which plainly intimate that the promise did not relate to all the descendants of Abraham, but was limited in the particular line of Isaac, excluding the rest.

The same principle is extended still farther, and is made distinctly and clearly applicable to the Israelites themselves, as added, ver. 10, "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated."

In the former case of Ishmael and Isaac, it might be supposed that Isaac was the child of promise and the object of the covenanted blessings, because the child of Sarah; but then what shall be said of his two descendants, Jacob and Esau, where the same distinction obtained, though they were twin brothers, of the same father and mother, and of the same birth; and yet Esau and his descendants were set aside, and Jacob and his descendants were made the objects of the promise, and this clearly without respect to any thing that they themselves had done, but plainly in virtue of God's sovereign appointment; because, before they were born, or could have done either good or evil, it

was said, "The elder shall serve the younger." And we are informed, that this was with the express design, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, might remain manifest, that it might appear that the whole was to be referred simply to his purpose and choice.

To strengthen his reasoning, the apostle quotes another remarkable passage from Mal. i. 2, 3, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." The phrases "loving and hating" are used in scripture for the preference given to one object over another, and does not always convey the ideas of love and hatred absolutely; but still from this phraseology, the general truth is very evident in God's preferring Jacob to Esau, that he exercised a sovereign pleasure in bestowing or withholding his benefits from them respectively; and as he did so in their case, so may he do in the case of others of their descendants, and so also may he do in reference to believers and unbelievers generally. And when the apostle was about to declare the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, and the bringing in of the Gentiles to make them heirs of the promise, he was only declaring the plain principles of the word of God. Such then is plainly the doctrine of the word of God. Whatever may be objected to it, it cannot be objected that the word of God is of none effect.—"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid."

Though such be shown to be the decision of the word of God, it will not prove satisfactory to the unbelieving objector. If he cannot succeed in disproving the apostle's doctrine from scripture the apostle was aware that he would have recourse to another mode, that he would urge that such a doctrine plainly proved

God to be unjust. How characteristic is this of those who object to the declarations of God's word! If they cannot deny or disprove its declarations, they try to escape from them by such random objections, forgetting that they are treading on holy and forbidden ground, and charging God foolishly. Their argument was very impious. Because, though those who thus object might pretend they were defending the honour of God, they were in reality accusing him of injustice, because it was his own declaration they were disputing, not man's. It was himself that so decided, and if the words implied injustice, it must mean that he is unjust in reality. An impious and blasphemous thought, which the apostle rejects with abhorrence, as contrary to nature, to truth, and to God's character, and not for one moment to be entertained. There were various ways in which the apostle might have shown from reason that this objection had no force, and by no means followed from his doctrine. As for instance, he might have replied, that in the case of Jacob and Esau, who were but his creatures, having nothing that they had not received, who were both alike undeserving of favour, he did no injustice in bestowing blessings upon Jacob, while he did not bestow them upon Esau and his posterity to the same extent. He bestowed upon them favours greater than they merited, and when he punished, it was not more than they justly deserved, even though they were punished with everlasting destruction from his presence. Supposing they had been both holy, it must be admitted, unless we impiously challenge the actual character and government of God, that he might have justly permitted them to sin and justly punish them for it. Surely then much more must it be admitted to be

right, to leave fallen and wicked creatures to perish in their sins, or to save some of them, and leave the others to perish, not in innocence but in their iniquity. All similar objections arise from the folly and presumption of sinners, forgetting that *all* are in a state of deserved condemnation, that it could not be unjust to leave them *all* in this state, much less could it be unjust to save some in mercy, and leave the rest, in justice, for serving the great and wise and holy, though perhaps inscrutable purposes of the divine government. Once admit, as who will dare deny, that God is just in permitting sin, though we cannot tell why, and who shall then deny that he is just in punishing some, because he does not punish all; or in other words, because he finds out a way by which he may be gracious to some. We should rather adore his infinite grace.

Some expositors endeavour to explain the passage before us as relating to the election, not of persons but of nations to special privileges. What advantage can be gained by such an interpretation we cannot comprehend. We can see nothing in the purpose of God to bless one individual above another individual, that is more unreasonable or unjust, than to bless one nation above another nation. That which would be objectionable in little would certainly be objectionable, and to a greater degree, in much.

Obvious as these answers seem to be in the present case, the apostle does not think proper to give them; probably as it might seem to imply the right of the objector to make them. He proceeds simply to maintain the high sovereignty of God, and that simply on the authority of the word of God, inculcating the high lesson, that if God hath said it, that is sufficient reason for believing that it cannot be unrighteous, and re-

proving those who will not be content with scriptural evidence, unless it satisfy what they are pleased to call reason, but which in reality may be only presumptuous ignorance. He therefore, instead of qualifying his former statement, repeats in the language of God, by Moses, the same offensive truth, ver. 15, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion; so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

This 15th verse is quoted from Exod. xxxiii. 19. Moses had prayed to see the glory of God; God, in answer, announces his sovereign goodness, and promises to make it pass before him, and to declare his name, his sovereign character; as on a former occasion when Moses desired to know his name, he announced himself as the "I am that I am," the independent and incomprehensible God, who rendereth not account of any of his matters. So here he declares his absolute and unchangeable sovereignty in dispensing his favours, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." It hath been remarked that the latter clause of this quotation is in the present tense, "I will have mercy on whom I *have* mercy," to denote God's fixed and unchangeable purpose, arising from his own sovereign pleasure; and that he could not be induced to alter it. So then, the apostle further adds in affirmation of the doctrine, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Such is the general inference to be drawn, applicable to all cases: viz., that it is not from the inclinations and endea-

vours of men, the earnestness of themselves, or the strenuousness of their efforts, that he bestows his favours; but solely of his own mercy. In the case of Jacob and Esau here alluded to, this was the case.

Esau was very desirous to obtain his father's blessing, and he ran to hunt venison for him, Gen. xxvii. 5—30; but he was supplanted by Jacob. And though Jacob did not seem to be thinking much about the matter, and though urged to it by his mother, and though the most disgraceful method was taken to succeed, yet God bestowed the blessing upon him; not surely because he thus deserved—for he deserved the contrary for his deceit—but of God that sheweth mercy, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand. True it is God makes his people willing in the day of his power and grace; he makes believers desirous of the blessings of salvation, but this is the result of his grace which implants the desire. By nature they are dead in trespasses and sins till God animates them with the breath of spiritual life. But “God who is rich in mercy FOR HIS GREAT LOVE wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” It is of his mercy that the desire is excited.

The apostle proceeds a step farther in illustrating and declaring this doctrine of divine sovereignty, alleging still, on scriptural authority, that God visits some with a greater degree of punishment than others, on the very same principle; though, observe, not with a greater degree than they merit. This is very strikingly the doctrine of Scripture in regard to Pharaoh.

Ver. 17. “For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up,

that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared in all the earth ;” “therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy ; and whom he will he hardeneth.”

The particle for “here” hath been rendered “more-over ;” because this quotation is not a reason for the doctrine stated in the previous verse, and does not refer to it ; but is an additional idea, or a reason referring to something more distant, and to be here supplied : the latter seems to be the case, as if the apostle had meant to say, “If you object to the statement of God’s selecting the objects of his grace, without regard to their own merits, what then will you say to God’s selecting monuments of his special vengeance, as well as of his special grace, by a mere act of sovereignty ?” Such, however, is the fact ; for the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, “Even for this same cause have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the nations of the earth.”

The expression “raised thee up,” it is proper to observe, has reference not to Pharaoh’s original creation, though with such a reference it would be impossible to dispute God’s right to create him for the purpose in question, if he had so willed, but to his being exalted to the eminent station which he held as the king of Egypt. God sustained him in life and power, gave him the opportunity and permission of acting according to the sinful and corrupt nature which he possessed. Had God, in his sovereign providence, instead of exalting him to his lofty station, left him in an obscure condition, the wickedness of his heart might not have been called forth to the same extent of hardihood and presumption ; but God had a spe-

cific design in so doing: viz., to manifest to all nations, and to read a lesson for all times, that his power was irresistible; and that the mightiest of the sons of men, that the most bold and determined, and hardened sinners, who presume to oppose the Almighty, must submissively bow to him, or be visited with terrible destruction; while God will soon defeat all their attempts to oppose his designs, and magnify his great name, display all his perfections of power, wisdom, faithfulness, truth, and mercy, in the destruction of his enemies, and the deliverance of his own people.

For this end God raised Pharaoh up to his guilty pre-eminence; and no other reason can be assigned for it but his sovereign pleasure. God might, had it so pleased him, have put another in his station, who, perhaps, in God's sovereign pleasure, was made an object of his mercy, or left in comparative innocence. He might have kept Pharaoh in circumstances that might have restrained, instead of fostered, his pride and presumption; but it did not so please him. But let it be observed, that though God thus chose Pharaoh to this guilty pre-eminence for the display of his own character and government, that he was not thus acting to Pharaoh as an innocent man, or contrary to his deserts. He was only permitting his natural character to develope itself, arranging his providence so that it might do so, that he might be filled with the fruit of his own devices—receive the reward of his doings. While his procedure was sovereign in thus choosing Pharaoh, it was just, and done in his righteous displeasure, and according to Pharaoh's deserts. And when it is said that God "hardened Pharaoh's heart," it does not mean that God "infused any principle of wickedness or rebellion into his heart,"—that were to

charge God with being the author of sin; but that God sentenced him to final hardness and obduracy of heart, judicially, as a just punishment for his iniquity,—that he withheld the softening influences of his grace; as were he to withhold the showers of heaven, he might be said to harden the earth, while he was only withholding those influences, without which, its natural tendency is to harden, and which he is under no obligation to bestow.

So that from these instances, and on these principles, it is very evident “that God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth.”

This is the only explanation that Paul gives of the matter. He refers the whole to God’s sovereignty —“to the counsel of his own will,” and that whether in the dispensing of his favours, or in the more signal manifestation of his displeasure on sinners. But in neither case must we imagine that God acts capriciously or unjustly; but on the highest reasons of holiness and justice.

On what grounds his sovereign grace and mercy are vouchsafed to sinners in consistency with all his moral perfections, is exhibited to us in the plan of redemption through Christ, as previously set forth to us in this epistle; and on the other side it has been well observed, “with respect to the rejection of an Esau, or what is more, the raising up and hardening of a Pharaoh, no violation of strictest justice can be alleged. They are but rewarded according to their doings. The permission of evil which the Almighty hates and punishes, is the only mystery, and it is a mystery which bewilders the finite understanding of man; for, for God to permit, is to will, to supply the necessary powers to perform. And this mystery

remains to be unravelled in accounting for the existence and final misery of every individual sinner, under every system that can be imagined."

The objector, however, is not to be so easily silenced, and he therefore is represented as taking up another ground of objection ; and to which the apostle replies, not by attempting to explain the incomprehensible mysteries of the divine character and government, but by again asserting God's sovereignty, and the wretched presumption of bandying answers with the Almighty. "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will ? Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ?"

This objection very plainly determines the doctrine taught by the apostle. Had it been any other doctrine than that of God's sovereignty in his dealings with sinful man, in having mercy upon some while he punishes others, either this objection would not have been stated, or the apostle would have declared that they had mistaken his doctrine. But he does no such thing. He leaves the doctrine broadly stated, without any attempts whatever to explain it away. On the contrary, in this as in the preceding answers, he repeats and strengthens the Scripture declarations. The objection here stated, is actually that brought by men in every age, and that which most readily occurs to the unhumiliated mind, and rebellious will of man. And it is singular that the very objection being here so plainly stated, anticipated and reproved by Paul, does not prevent men who profess to reverence the Scriptures as the word of God, from urging it. But there is no degree of pre-

sumption and inconsistency that may not be expected of the human mind ; and no error, however plainly unscriptural, and contrary to the mind of God, if that mind is to be gathered from his own word, which men will not advance and justify, on the ground that they are defending the honour of God, as if they could be wiser than God ; or reconcile what they, as absurdly as wickedly, imagine to be inconsistencies in the declarations of “ God only wise.”

Here the objector is conceived as saying, If it be then the doctrine of the word of God, as you make these several passages speak, that God bestows his blessings solely according to his own free sovereign grace and mercy ; still more, if it be true that he raises up, as in the case of Pharaoh, some to exalted stations, and makes them signal monuments of his vengeance, and all for the promotion of his own purposes, why then doth he yet find fault, “for who hath resisted his will?”

This, it will readily be perceived, is the common objection urged against what, after what has been already said, we may call the Scriptural doctrine of God’s preordination : viz., that it destroys the responsibility and free agency of man, because it places him in a condition which he cannot help.

Now it does seem very plain from this, and part of the preceding chapter, that there is a predetermination on the part of God ; and it is equally plain from Scripture (and reason and conscience declare it also), that man is a responsible and free agent. No man can divest himself of this belief. God certainly teaches it in his word, in that he finds fault, expostulates with the sinner, commands, entreats, and threatens, —holds out promises and rewards to allure and en-

courage, and threatenings and punishments to deter, and laments their obstinacy and rebellion ; and what is here a difficulty, presumptuous man pronounces an inconsistency,—and either rejects the word of God for declaring it, or, with equal folly and impiety, sets about explaining away its statements, so as to remove the doctrine which seems so obnoxious. To pronounce a definite sentence on any subject, requires evidently that we should be fully able to comprehend it. And it is evidently absurd to pronounce on what we do not understand ; and if it be a case where God is concerned, impiety is added to absurdity : and both these are chargeable upon the man who presumes to enter into judgment with God. The apostle Paul seems to have seen this amazing folly and impiety, and may be conceived as suddenly stopping the mouth of the gainsayer in the words before us : Nay, hold, proceed no farther, who art thou that answerest again in the presence of God ? recollect thyself, thou ignorant and short-sighted creature, who art but of yesterday and knowest nothing ; who, even when thy mind is most highly gifted, schooled, and exercised, art baffled and confounded with every thing around thee,—who canst not comprehend the complex relations of human governments ; in what manner thou art influenced by all men, and by every thing around thee ; how a change of the atmosphere will affect thy determinations, and yet thou never dreamest that it destroys thy responsibility. Who art thou, thou that knowest as little of the Almighty's mazy and yet simple plans, as the insect knows of the system of earth, moon, sun, and stars ? Who art thou that presumest to question the decisions of the Almighty ? His judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding

out. "It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." He giveth not an account of any of his matters. Who art thou that darest to propose a scheme more suitable to the attributes of God? "Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" Beware of questioning the plain declarations of God's word, lest haply thou be fighting against God. When we know that God is holy, just, and good, what impiety is there in calling God to account! "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Could any thing be more absurd? We are far more absolutely in the hand of God than any work of art in the hand of the artificer; for the matter and the form we take are God's, and wilt thou refuse to the Almighty, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, the liberty claimed by man himself, over the work of his own hands, to consult his own will in the formation of it? "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" Doth any one ever dispute the power of the potter to make what kind of vessel he pleases out of the same original mass of clay,—to form one for a more honourable, and another for a meaner use? Would his acting in this way ever be considered any indication of injustice? Assuredly not. And why then shall it be thought unjust in God, out of the same corrupt mass of sinful human nature, which hath no claims but those of punishment on the Almighty, to bestow the favours of his grace upon one, while he punishes another? Shall nothing be

ceded to the will of God, who is in every thing essentially and necessarily guided by holiness, justice, goodness, and cannot by any possibility do any thing inconsistent with these perfections?

We must carefully observe here that the comparison must not be carried beyond its legitimate extent. We are not to imagine that human beings are to be considered merely as a passive mass, inert either to good or evil, and the form of the one or the other to be impressed on them, though having no moral nature before. All that is intended to be conveyed is, that as a potter who finds the mass of clay ready made to his hands, makes out of it vessels more or less honourable as seems good to him; and no one ever dreams of questioning his right to do so; upon what principle is it that God is to be questioned, when, out of the mass of human nature as it is, it should please God to leave it as sin has made it, or out of the same corruption to form, by his miraculous grace, some portions of it to honour, to salvation and glory; while another portion he appoints to merited degradation and destruction? Who shall presume to murmur, if God, "willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."

In these verses now quoted, we see at what point the apostle institutes the comparison, between sinners and the lump of clay. They are here called "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." The question is not how they came into this situation. None will deny that

it was by their own fault, none but an open and presumptuous blasphemer will affirm that God formed them thus. They are fitted for,—the proper objects of, destruction; they are defiled with iniquity; there is no soundness in any human being, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot; they are unfit for glory and happiness, and nothing that is unclean can enter into God's presence and glory, or enjoy his blessedness. They are an abomination in his sight, their proper place, their proper portion, is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Down to it they will go by a natural and necessary tendency, and nothing but an act of Almighty power exerted by infinite grace can preserve them from it. What if God then should delay their destruction, as in the case of Pharaoh, and as he does, indeed, in the case of every sinner, endure them with much long-suffering? What if he allowed them to go on in their mad career, showing mercy by delaying their destruction, for which they were already ripe; bore with the enormities which were so hateful to him, and permitted them to fill up the measure of their iniquities, to make a full display of their desperate wickedness, that thus he might make a signal display of his wrath against iniquity, and manifest his almighty power in the final overthrow and eternal perdition of the boldest, most hardened, and most prosperous criminals? What is there in this to which mortal man may object? If he declares that his long-suffering is salvation, if he warns the wicked, calls them to return, and offers them mercy, and they know in their hearts that he never refused to receive them, that they never made the attempt to return, that they “despised the riches of his long-suffering,” “treasuring up unto themselves

wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," what can be objected if at last he should make his power and his wrath known upon them? What else could reason and the strictest justice demand, what else could they ever imagine?

Still more ought we to suppress every murmur, nay, still more ought we to wonder and adore the infinite grace of God, that from this state of things, that out of the same lump of unformed corruption, he should have "vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Originally, they were no better fitted for glory than the others. Without God's grace, the regenerating and sanctifying power of his Spirit, unless by his almighty power exerted for their salvation, like the others they would have ripened for destruction; and who shall murmur, nay, who shall not adore, that God actually prepared them, made them meet for glory and felicity? To them it was unspeakable mercy, worthy the admiration of all intelligent creatures. To the others it was no injustice. And why should God not do in this matter as he sees cause, to vindicate his sovereign power and universal government? Who would object, if the sovereign of an empire, to vindicate his government, should out of a number of hardened criminals display the power of his government, and vindicate the majesty of the laws in the execution of some, while, to show the extent of his clemency, he made others the objects of his mercy? And why should rebellious Jews, or any others, who had obstinately rejected the mercy of God, object if he should prepare vessels of mercy from whatever quarter he chose, even us, whom he hath called, "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

CHAP. III.

ELECTION.

WITH the doctrine of the divine sovereignty thus explained, and that in connection with the condition of man as a sinner, is very closely connected, if not necessarily springing out of it, the doctrine of election. Elisha Coles says,

“All the objections that are brought against the doctrine of election’s absoluteness, personality, and eternity; the peculiarity of redemption, the efficacious predominance of grace in calling, and believers’ invincible perseverance in faith and holiness, would all be disbanded and sent to their own place, were this one truth (which none in words will deny) but truly believed and received in love; namely, that God hath an absolute right of dominion over his creatures, to dispose and determine of them as seemeth him good; and that in the doing thereof he cannot but do right.”

We would venture to add to this, one other idea, that if men were but truly convinced of the great Scripture doctrine of man’s total ruin by the fall, they would most gratefully rejoice, not only that God is sovereign, but sovereign in his grace and purpose of saving his elect, without which it is impossible to conceive how man that is an impotent sinner could be saved at all.

The following passage is equally just in thought, and admirable in statement :—

“The doctrine of man’s impotency—of his total inability to bring himself back to God, should be held up. The opposite doctrine—the doctrine of man’s ability to convert himself, countenances the absurdity that

man is to return to a dependence on Jehovah by the belief of a certain independence,—which is not only absurd, but also most dishonourable to God. It would not do to tell a man that he *may* come to Christ, but that he *must* come. Some, indeed, would have man to do all, though he could do nothing ; and others would have him to do nothing, because all was done for him. As long as I am told that I must come to God,—and that I can come, I am left to suppose that some good thing, or some power of good remains in me, I arrogate to myself that which belongs to Jehovah. The creature is exalted, and God is robbed of his glory. If, on the other hand, I am told that I *cannot* come to God, but not also told that I *must* come, I am left to rest contented at a distance from God, I am not responsible for my rebellion, and God Jehovah is not my God. But if we preach that sinners *can't* come, and yet *must* come, then is the honour of God vindicated, and the sinner is shut up. Man must be so shut up that he *must* come to Christ, and yet know that he *cannot*. He must come to Christ, or he will look to another, when there is no other to whom he may come ; he cannot come, or he will look to himself. This is the gospel vice, to shut up men to the faith. Some grasp at one limb of the vice and some at the other, leaving the sinner open—but when a man is shut up that he must and cannot, he is shut up to the faith—shut up *to* the faith, and then would he be shut up *in* the faith. God is declared to be Jehovah, and the sinner is made willing to be saved *by Him*, in his own way, as sovereign in His *grace*. Many may dislike this doctrine as harsh and severe, but it is because they view God's *sovereignty* apart from his *grace*. They spoke of the sovereign God, but why not of the *sovereignty of grace*. For himself, he felt comfort when shut up to this truth, that God was sovereign, and his grace sovereign ; for though he was a sinner—an absolute sinner, Jehovah had said, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.' This doctrine came like heaven's own thunder, and struck down all human dependence. It came upon man as lost, as the very chief of sinners, and depending solely on God's will ; and then, oh how blessed to know the sovereignty of grace. It struck him down when he read, 'The Son

quickeneth whom he will.' His mind fixed on the 'whom he will,' and he was undone, because it did not depend on his own will, but on the will of another. But he read again and found that it was *the Son* that quickeneth whom he will, and this raised him from the dust, because the Son, on whose sovereign will his salvation depended, was the same 'Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' It was of importance that the truth which gave such glory to God, which alone could comfort, because it alone brought man down, be declared; that Jehovah's glory be exhibited; that men be made to feel their own emptiness; that they may see Christ's sufficiency, and Christ's yearning heart over sinners."*

Of this most interesting doctrine of election, very dear to the experience of many a child of God, and "the foundation of God," on which his security and comfort rest, we can only give a very short outline.

Our doctrine of election, so far as we are at present concerned with it, is summed up in the passages already quoted at pp. 68—71, particularly ch. iii. sects. i—viii: and we trust no one will say of those who choose so to state their sense of this doctrine, that they take this document for their rule of faith, or maintain the doctrine, because it is there. It would be more charitable and more in accordance with the truth, to say of us that we cling to this document, and choose to express ourselves in its phraseology, because we believe it expresses the truth of God on the subject in such admirably full, comprehensive, and definite terms, that no one can misapprehend what we mean, or whereof we affirm. This is no

* Speech of the Rev. Dr. Dulean in the Free Assembly, 1844.

small advantage, the want of which, it is manifest to all but themselves, places some of those who boast of their freedom from the trammels of a fixed creed, in the very awkward predicament of sending those with whose errors and misconceptions of their meaning they have to deal, to search for their real sentiments in the *mare magnum* of semi-private, semi-official, semi-authoritative reviews, magazines, and sermons.*

We do not think it necessary to expose what we

* Every adherent to the Westminster Confession, who has read the following passage subscribed by the name of Dr. Wardlaw, must certainly think it is no great matter of triumph to those who are reduced to the necessity of writing it, to boast of the want of an *authorised* creed :—

“ We must begin with expressing our astonishment, that any doubt should be surmised about the fact of the doctrines of *personal unconditional election* and *special divine influence in conversion* having been all along amongst the ‘ things most surely believed ’ by the Congregational body in Scotland :—we do not say THE bond of union, but essential articles in the harmony of evangelical truth,—of ‘ the faith once delivered to the saints ; ’ and thus indispensable parts of the material of that bond. We might appeal for the correctness of this to our oldest pastors and our oldest members generally ; as well as to the authors connected with the body, whether of tracts or of volumes, and to the entire tenor of its accredited periodicals :—and we are still satisfied, that if there have occurred cases, such as those you specify, in the admission of members, they have been the unauthorized exceptions, not the generally sanctioned rule. Our reputation, as an evangelical body, has invariably, in the religious world, included these articles of truth as a part of our understood principles.” — Correspondence between Congregational Churches.

deem the inherent unsoundness of that definition of election, which makes it consist in "God's purpose to exert upon the minds of certain members of the human family, that special and holy influence which will secure their ultimate salvation." We do not think that to choose men "*to salvation*," is the same as to choose them "to become, in his own time and manner, the recipients of this special and holy influence which will secure their salvation."*† And we can hardly imagine that the acute and able writer from whose work we have quoted these words would have been content with it, but for its bearing on his doctrine of universal atonement. Without discussing it in form, which we cannot do, it will be met as we illustrate the doctrine we maintain.

On the view of election contained in the passages now referred to in the Confession of Faith, Whitby says, "And here note, that this election or predestination considereth all men in the same condition, alike miserable and damnable, alike impotent and wanting effectual grace, and alike meet to be the objects of his eternal love, and partakers of effectual grace." We do not like the ambiguity of the word "meet" here. But it is the passage which follows we wish particularly to notice. "So that in two apples of equal goodness, no reason shall be given why I should choose one rather than the other, so neither can any reason be assigned why all or any of these persons are thus elected to salvation, rather than all or any that are not elected."†

We doubt not that God hath reasons of infinite

* Payne on Sovereignty.

† Whitby on Election, &c. ch. iii.

wisdom, justice, goodness, and mercy for his purpose of election, whether we can assign them or no. But while the illustration used by Whitby is sneering, and in the circumstances of the case, where the Almighty, in reference to a very solemn subject, is concerned, undignified and mean, there is also a most evident shifting of the ground in the use of the phrase "of equal goodness," where the plain manifest correlative terms should have been "of equal badness," and that badness unmitigated corruption, "impotency," enmity. It is a selection where there is, by the supposition, and in fact, no goodness at all, but the very reverse, nothing but sin—nothing but impotency. Whatever may be alleged as matter of inference, it cannot be denied that the doctrine, as we have stated it from the Confession of Faith, most plainly repudiates both the notion, that man is elected because of any goodness in him or foreseen in him, and the notion that any one is ordained to wrath for any thing but his "*sin*." This, it will not be denied by any with whom we have now more especially to do, is the doctrine of scripture.

Man then being a sinner, and only a sinner, whence could the idea of a true salvation, the salvation of the word of God, originate? In other words, could salvation originate with man, or must it originate with God only? This is in reality the grand point of controversy: "Who shall have the glory of salvation ascribed to him, God or the creature." And yet the question thus put, reason anticipates the answer. It must be God. If salvation originate with God and he be the author of it, he must in like manner be the finisher of it. No one but an atheist will contend that salvation in any of its parts is beyond the "providence"

of God,—that it is not embraced in the one divine, all-comprehensive *purpose* of God. What then is his purpose in regard to the salvation of sinners?

He himself alone can tell us. From the moral perfections, the perfect excellence and all-sufficiency of God, we can predicate things without inconvenience, which God cannot do; in other words, *will* not do. For instance, we know that he cannot sin; that he will not tempt to sin; that he will not disparage his own perfections; that he will not therefore suffer sin to go unpunished. But we cannot know what He will do, though he *might* do it. We could not know beforehand that He would save a single sinner. We know He might justly condemn eternally every sinner; no Christian denies this. We know, moreover, that justice demands He should do it, and if the sinner therefore escape, it must not only originate in his grace, but the whole plan must be divine, and the whole acts tending to, and efficacious of salvation, must be of divine origin and receive divine direction. It is morally impossible it can be of the creature. The infinite perfections of God cannot be made to harmonize, where they would conflict, by any thing originating in the creature, much less in the creature who is a sinner and only a sinner.

What then saith the scripture as to the purpose of salvation? It cannot be denied by any that the idea of election in some sense is a scriptural one; and whoever be the objects of that election, whether nations or individuals, whether to temporal or eternal blessings; the principle must be admitted. But is the doctrine of election, as we have have stated it to mean, a doctrine of scripture? There are two ways of ascertaining the doctrine of scripture, either by inferen-

ces drawn from its general and undeniable principles, or by specific declarations on the point in question. Agreeably to the former of these modes the doctrine of election is deducible, 1st. From the perfections of God. A Being of infinite wisdom and power must design what He does, and have power to do *what He* designs. The contrary conclusion is absurd and destructive of the premises. Either then God, as the author of eternal salvation, effectually saves all men, or he does not. If He does He must have designed it. If He does not, He must never have designed it. That He does not, none with whom we have now to do will deny. The conclusion then is manifest; he never designed it. The whole scriptures testify to this. Take some instances, "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Has he said it, and shall he not do it? Or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" The dealings of God in his providence may vary, but all these are comprehended in his one original purpose, which cannot change. Job therefore says, "He is of one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desires, even that he does; for he performs the thing that is appointed for me?" "I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." "Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." "There are many devices in a man's heart; but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand;" "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation." "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;

and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or say unto Him, What doest thou?" "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." God thus all-wise and almighty can neither act without design, nor be defeated in what He does design. It plainly follows, then, that as God only saves some of the children of men, he designed to save them, and no others.

The same thing may be argued from the foreknowledge of God. This, though a common, is a very plain and obvious, and, therefore, powerful argument. It stands thus, and requires nothing more than to be stated:—That God foreknows every thing that can come to pass in time, and especially does He foreknow every creature that shall be saved. Nothing can come to pass contrary to this foreknowledge. To deny this conclusion is a denial of the premises, in other words, of the foreknowledge of God. It is not denied that all men will not be saved, and is admitted that only some shall actually be saved. God foreknows this, and He foreknows it because He designed it. He therefore foreknows and determines the salvation of some, while he foreknows and determines the condemnation of others.

It is hardly necessary to say here that there is no injustice in this procedure. None of those whose opinions we have more immediately in view will assert that it would have been unjust in God to punish the whole human race, by nature dead in sin. It cannot be unjust to punish some for their *sin*; neither can it be any impeachment of the mercy of God, that He saves others by his grace reigning through righteousness.

It may be said that God designed the salvation of all men upon certain conditions. This proposition we could understand, were it asserted that all men shall actually be saved, because all men shall actually perform the conditions. But we cannot understand how it is possible that God designed the salvation of all men, but upon certain conditions ; yet never designed those conditions should be performed—nay, foreknew they would never be performed by all ; and never even designed the certain performance of them in any. Such notions make very strange work with the perfections of Jehovah.

But what saith the Scripture on this point ? There are various ways by which this question is usually answered. We may, for the sake of conciseness, adopt the following :—

1. Some texts that prove a personal election in contradistinction to an election of churches and nations.

2. Some texts that assert an election to salvation, in opposition to those persons who maintain that election refers only to the means of grace, rather than to a certainty of being saved by those means.

3. Mention those passages which assert the certain salvation of a chosen people, and refute the notion of a conditional and mutable election.

The doctrine here asserted, it will be perceived, is in opposition to the three points maintained by Whitby on this subject, and may be supposed therefore to meet the leading views of the Arminian school, and substantially the leading views of various other parties who would decline being ranked with the followers of Arminius.

1. Let us then attend to some of those texts that

prove a personal election, in contradistinction to an election of churches and nations.

We do not think it necessary to make one single remark on those texts which are adduced to prove an election of churches and nations. It is not denied : on the contrary, the very principles which imply the one, imply the other ; though to different effects. The proof of the one is not the disproof of the other. We shall therefore proceed at once to establish the doctrine of personal election from the Word of God, simply saying in one word, that we cannot discover that the election of nations or churches to special temporal privileges, or blessings, differs in the smallest degree, in point of principle, from the election of individuals to special, spiritual, and eternal blessings.

We apprehend few will imagine when our Lord says, "Many are called, but few are chosen," that this is a choice of nations or churches to outward privileges. In fact the call itself is the outward privilege ; and if the choice is to be understood only of these, the statement is a plain contradiction of itself.

It matters little as to the principle involved whether it is affirmed of Jews or Gentiles, though Christ came not to declare great general truths to Jews merely. It was not so under the Old Testament ; still less is it so under the New. It alters not the case to say that the "chosen" means those who believe. Faith proceeds from the election of God. "God hath chosen you," says the apostle, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." "Ye believe not," said our Lord, "because ye are not of my sheep."

When it is said, "For the elect's sake these days shall be shortened ; and, if it were possible, they

should deceive the very elect,—and he shall send his angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other ;” whether the judgments of these days refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the distress and destruction of nations at a more solemn period, it is plain that the “elect’s sake” cannot refer to either ; for it is they that are to be the sufferers. And how or when there is to be a gathering of nations, as such, from the four winds of heaven, we have yet to learn. To interpret the “elect,” whom it is impossible to deceive, of persevering Christians, makes the saying so very bald a truism, that it is surprising such a man as Whitby could have had recourse to it. When Paul says, “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of his Son*,” no one will be so wild as to affirm that nations, as such, are elected to any such conformity.

It may be admitted that in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, the national election of the Jews is declared ; but it is undeniable that there is a decree personal to Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh spoken of in that chapter. And to say that these men are held as heads of tribes and nations, only makes the truth more plain. Because we cannot hold the members to contain the general idea, and the head the particular and subordinate. While the apostle speaks in the same chapter of the chosen Israel, he speaks of an election out of this elected people. We therefore read of a remnant (of Israelites) according to the election of grace, “all are not Israel, that are of Israel.” “Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew ; for I also am an Israelite.” His being

an Israelite, according to the notion of those who contend for a national election *only*, would, in the circumstances, have been the very proof that he was cast away; but there was another election, and he was one of that chosen people whom God was to save with an "everlasting salvation," even as in the time of Elias there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. One has only to announce the following text to show the entire inapplicancy and insufficiency of the national theory to explain the Scripture doctrine of election: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." We began to underline one or two of the words of this text; but found that every word of it is emphatically opposed to any such theory of election.

There are various texts which speak of election to faith, holiness, and the like; as well as those applicable to an election to salvation, and which cannot possibly be applied to nations without manifest absurdity. Some of them will be adduced under their proper heads.

Farther, the Scriptures not only speak of a *personal election*; but an election of a certain determinate number of persons. We read of those whose "names are written in heaven," and others whose "names are written in the Lamb's book of life." "The *sheep* hear his voice: and he calleth them *by name*, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice," John x. 3, 4. Again, ver. 26—29, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life ; neither shall any be able to pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all ; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." It is here plainly declared that because they were not Christ's sheep, they did not believe,—that it is a characteristic of all Christ's sheep that they do believe ; that they shall never perish, because they have been given to him of the Father who is greater than all.

2. We would now shortly notice some of those texts which assert an election to salvation in opposition to those persons who maintain that election refers only to the means of grace, rather than to a certainty of being saved by these means.

There are only two passages known to us where salvation may denote means of salvation, though not necessarily. One where it is said, John iv. 22, "Salvation is of the Jews." We apprehend that it is as true of salvation itself, as of the means of salvation, that it came by the Jews, "of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came." The other is when it is said, Rom. xi. 11, "Salvation is come to the Gentiles." It is no more true of all Gentiles, that the means of salvation have come to them, than that salvation itself has come to them. When, therefore, we adduce scriptures which assert an election to salvation, or to what implies it, it is an assertion of election in the highest sense we have affirmed of it. Our Lord said to the mother of Zebedee's children, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give ; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father," Matt. xx. 23. We read therefore of a

“kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world.” When the kingdom was prepared for *them*, they were in the design of the Father. Those who are with God therefore are said to be “called, and *chosen*, and faithful,” Rev. xvii. 14.

Our Lord said to his disciples, John xiii. 18, “I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen. Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you hath a devil.” The only consistent meaning of this passage is well stated by Mr. Sladen.* “Though one of you, my disciples, is a devil, a traitor, and shall fall away to destruction, yet I have chosen the rest of you to eternal life, which you shall infallibly obtain.”

The following passage, viewed in connection with the context, is very clear and specific as a proof of an election to salvation, 1 Thess. i. 4, “Knowing, brethren, your election of God.” “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father,” ver. 5, 6, 7. “For our gospel come not to you in words only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.” When the apostle adduces these things as evidence that he knew their election of God, it cannot mean an election to the external means and privileges of the gospel. This he knew without any such evidences. But when the gospel came not in word, but

* Lime Street Lectures.

in power, in its blessed effects, it was the evidence of an election to eternal life.

When Peter exhorts the brethren to "give diligence to make their calling and election sure," it must mean something more than an election to external privileges. They did not need any diligence to ascertain this. They knew it by the fact of their possession.

But the Scriptures are plain and express in asserting an election to salvation. We read, Rom. ix. 23, of the "vessels of mercy which God had before prepared unto glory." *All God's ways are everlasting.* Eph. i. 11, "In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." In 1 Pet. i. the apostle addresses those who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, in whose mercy they are begotten again to the hope of an eternal inheritance. Of the believing Thessalonians as well as of himself the apostle says, 1 Thess. v. 9, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." In Acts xiii. 48, it is said of the Gentiles, when Paul and Barnabas addressed them, "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Without discussing whether the gloss attempted to be put on the word "ordained," viz. as many as were "disposed," be critically correct or not, we may remark that had believing depended on their disposition without a previous purpose and work of God, not one of them could either know or desire the "eternal life" which God offers.

3. We come now to adduce some of those passages which assert the certain salvation of a chosen people,

and to refute the notion of a conditional and mutable election; or otherwise put, in opposition to an election by which God wills the salvation of all, but secures the salvation of none.

This latter doctrine is most cheerless and discouraging to the true and humble believer, fitted to drive him to utter despair, were it possible so “to deceive the elect,” and fitted above all things to deceive the presumptuous to their ruin. To admit the doctrine of election, in other words, a purpose and decree of God to love some of the human race, and yet that such decree is conditional and mutable, is dishonouring to God, and a palpable contradiction alike in thought and in terms. It is disproved by the arguments already adduced from the perfections of God, as well as from the very nature of the divine decrees. If election be a purpose of God to save any, then election must be unchangeable; and must, as according to the Scripture it does, include not only the end but the whole means and every thing relating thereto.

But we have only space for a few scripture proofs. We cannot imagine that the intercession of our blessed Lord, founded on the Father’s gift of election, as expressed in the following words, could be of uncertain or doubtful issue, John xvii. 24, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.” Let it be remembered that our Lord had said, ver. 20, “neither pray I for these alone,” his then living disciples, “but for *all them* who *shall* believe on me through their word.” The passage already quoted, John x. 26—29, is most express on the whole subject, and these words are especially ex-

press on the election to eternal life, and the certainty of the issue, "and I give unto *them*," his sheep, "eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them is greater than all." On the doctrine we maintain, there is security and comfort indeed to the sheep of Christ, especially to those of them trembling at the power and rage of the "devouring lion;" but on the doctrine of a conditional and mutable election, it is unintelligible and cheerless. We were asked the other day by one who, from twenty-five years' knowledge, we deem a true enlightened believer and consistent follower of the Lord Jesus, but then in what we believed a temporary distress for the safety of the immortal soul, "Do you believe Satan can get possession of my soul?" We replied in the words of Scripture now quoted; but could not have done so on the theory of a conditional and mutable election. It had been trifling and mockery on such a theory. What can be a higher proof of the certain and infallible security and salvation of the elect, than the saying of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 24, of the predicted false Christs and false prophets, and their lying wonders, that "if it *were* possible, they should deceive the very elect?" Blessed be God it is not possible. Their salvation is beyond the reach of human conditions, or created mutability. It rests on the eternal purpose of God, embracing the end from the beginning. It is common to observe that it is in reference to such destructive deceivers that the apostle says, 2 Tim. ii. 19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." Is it of any such conditional, doubtful, mutable election,

which, in short, is not an election, but a proposal, that Paul speaks when he says, Tit. i. 1, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. In hope of *eternal* life, which God, that *cannot lie*, *promised before the world began*," &c. Where could there be any thing conditional or mutable here? The supernatural apprehending by the power and grace of God of Paul, the persecutor, yet "*chosen vessel*" unto Christ, is in harmony with God's promise of eternal life to him; but has no relation to a conditional proposal. Some of the passages previously quoted, bear also upon the present head of argument; but we proceed to notice some where the purpose is connected with the process or means.

Thus Acts xiii. 48, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Being ordained of God they embraced the gospel call. The rest rejected it. The notion is altogether forced and unnatural, and contrary to the scriptural doctrine of the "enmity of the carnal mind" to God and the things of God, that it means those who were "disposed," desirous of real eternal life. Of eternal life such have neither notion nor desire. If they had such disposition, it was of God. If of God, of his purpose and design; and the design, the faith and the issue, eternal life, are all of God. The following texts are so clear to the point in hand, that for ourselves we cannot conceive how they admit of any question, Eph. i. 3, 4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world,

that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." First, All is ascribed to the free choice of God. Second, It is a choice *in* Christ. Third, It is a choice before the foundation of the world. Fourth, It is a choice of Him to be holy and without blame. Fifth, It is to the adoption of children, to be heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ. Sixth, It is so certain in the issue that they are spoken of as actually "blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, or things, in Christ." What more extensive, "what more certain and secure?" Where the mutable in all this? Again, the apostle says, Eph. ii. 10, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The apostle had just declared salvation to be of grace, through the medium of a faith which is not of human origination, but the free gift of God; and he proceeds to declare that wherein believers yield the fruit of good works, it is as created anew by divine agency, united to and existing in Christ, and that from an ordination of God, decreeing the result, their walking in good works.

We shall now give a few passages which ascribe both the end and the means to the election of God. The remarkable words of the apostle, Rom. viii. 29, "For whom he did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." On this passage we would quote the concise remarks of Mr. Sladen:—

“Let us take these words which way we will, read them backwards or forwards, they tell us, that election and salvation, both initial and final, are undivided, and inseparably united together. Should we ask, Who are they that are predestinated? The text tells us, those, and only those, who are effectually called, justified, and glorified. Should it be further asked, Who are they that are glorified? The answer must be, Those who are justified and called: And who are those? Those whom God did predestinate. ‘Moreover, whom he did predestinate.’ Add to this what the apostle says of Israel; ‘Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.’ What was it that Israel sought after? Nothing less than righteousness and life, justification and salvation. Now, though Israel, as a body or nation, did not obtain this which he sought after, yet the election, or the elected, among Israel did. I would only farther mention that of the apostle; ‘Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling;’ and this ‘not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.’ If this text stands in need of any explication, you have it in these words: ‘After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.’”*

We were curious to see how Whitby disposed of this passage from Rom. viii. 29, 30; and we could not devise a better way to convince every sincere intelligent person of the weakness of his scheme, and of the impregnable strength derived from this text to the support of the orthodox doctrine of election, than simply to peruse his miserable attempt to set it aside. He is conscious of it himself; and, accordingly, after

* Lime Street Lectures.

stating that the text speaks of those who actually love God; and that to love God, and to be called according to his purpose, are both of the same import, he escapes as speedily as possible into the region of patristical authority, which has not always been that either of sound criticism or common sense. Instead of being in his hands a chain either of principles, or of comfort, it is a few disjointed fragments presented to a man without hands to lay hold of them.

A few extracts from the Confessions of the Reformed churches will be considered by all impartial persons competent to form an opinion, as of greatly more weight than the opinions of some of the fathers of the fourth, third, or even second centuries. The doctrine of the Helvetic Confession is as follows:—“God, from eternity, hath predestinated or chosen, freely, and of his own mere grace, without any respect of persons, saints whom he wills to save (*facere salvos*) in Christ, according to that of the apostle: ‘God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.’ And again, “Who hath saved us, (*salvos fecit nos*) and called us by an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (*ante tempora eterna*) but is now made manifest by the appearance of Jesus Christ our Saviour.’”*

The Belgian Confession, Article xvi., says, We believe that God (after that the whole race of Adam was precipitated into perdition and destruction by the fault of the first man) hath demonstrated and exhibited himself such as he is in truth, namely, both merciful

* Sylloge Conf. x. p. 34.

and just,—merciful, indeed, by delivering and saving from damnation and destruction those whom he hath chosen in his eternal counsel, according to his gratuitous goodness by Jesus Christ our Lord, without any respect of works of their own. Just, indeed, in leaving others in their own fall and perdition, into which they headlong gave themselves.”

The whole of the first chapter of the Judgment of the Synod of Dort, consisting of eighteen Articles, is most admirable and distinct in affirming the doctrine of election; and so in like manner is the rejection of the opposite errors in nine distinct Articles. We regret that we cannot give them at length. We shall only quote here the seventh and ninth Articles of the Judgment of the Synod:—

VII. “But election is the immutable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, out of the whole human race, fallen by their own fault from their primeval integrity into sin and ruin, he hath, according to the most free good pleasure of his own will, out of mere grace, chosen a certain multitude of men, neither better nor worthier than others, but lying in common misery with others, to salvation in Christ,—whom, from eternity, he hath constituted Mediator and Head of all the elect, and the foundation of salvation: and hath decreed to give them to him to be saved, and efficaciously to call and draw them to communion with him by his word and Spirit; or to give him by a true faith, to justify, sanctify, and at length to glorify them, powerfully kept in the communion of his Son, for the demonstration of his mercy, and the praise of the riches of his glorious grace, as it is written.” They then quote Eph. i. 4—6; Rom. viii. 30.

IX. “This same election is made not from faith foreseen, and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality and disposition, as prerequisite cause or condition in choosing any man; but an election to faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, &c. And, moreover, election is the fountain of all saving good whence faith, holiness,

and other saving gifts, and, finally, eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, do flow, according to that of the apostle: He hath chosen us (not because we were, but) that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, Eph. i. 4."*

We have stated this doctrine of election not so much for the purpose of fully illustrating and defending it, as for the purpose of opening the way to the application of the general doctrine expressed in the title of this little work, to the doctrine of the extent of redemption; we shall therefore waive the discussion of the leading objections brought against it.

Before proceeding farther, perhaps we ought to notice what seems to us a very strange mode of stating the doctrine of election,—a mode which could hardly be adopted by those professing to hold the orthodox view of it, except as to its bearing on another theory, that of universal atonement, with a limited application:—

“By the term election, then, we mean an act of choice on the part of God. When the term is used in its most important application, in the sense which it bears in the creed of those who maintain the doctrine of eternal and personal election, (which doctrine we now proceed to unfold and establish,) it denotes, according to the statement usually given of the doctrine, God’s act of choosing some members of the human family to enjoy eternal life through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;—the first member of the sentence exhibiting the end, and the concluding member the means, through which this end is attained. It may be wished, perhaps, that a statement of the doctrine, more entirely accordant with the facts of the case, had been substituted in lieu of this: for, in strict accuracy, it cannot be said that God directly decrees that any man shall believe the gospel, and persevere unto the end, and inherit eternal life; but that he deter-

* Sylloge Conf. p. 372, 373.

mines to visit him with that special influence of the Holy Spirit which will certainly secure these delightful results. It is important to observe that the decrees of God are exactly co-extensive with the actions of God. They reach as far as the latter, but they do not go beyond them. 'God does what he decrees, and decrees what he does.' Now God does not repent, and believe, and love, and obey; he does not accordingly decree that repentance, and faith, and love, should exist. It is man that gives credit to the Divine record—that perseveres unto the end. That which God does, in the whole of this business, is the exertion of that special grace which leads men so to act as to secure their salvation. And this it is that God decrees to do. Election is, then, God's purpose to exert upon the minds of certain members of the human family that special and holy influence which will secure their ultimate salvation. Yet, as he knows perfectly what will be the result of that influence, and as he employs it to secure this result, it is in harmony with scriptural phraseology to say, that the result is both decreed and effected by Him. God withdrew from Pharaoh those restraints of his providence which, while they remained, prevented the full development of his depravity; but as he foresaw the consequence of that withdrawal, and, as it is not, perhaps, too much to say that the withdrawal was designed to afford an opportunity for that development, he is declared 'to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh.' On the same principle, he is said to have chosen some men to salvation; *i. e.*, he has chosen them to become, in his own time and manner, the recipients of that special and holy influence which will secure their salvation. With this explanation of the common statements of the doctrine of election, they may be allowed to stand, and there will be no necessity to disturb the usual phraseology upon the subject."*

We have quoted this long passage because of its important bearing on the next division of our subject, as well as on the point in hand. We shall make a few brief remarks upon it:

* Payne on Divine Sovereignty, p. 36, 37.

1st. The able author of this work surely did not perceive when he expressed the wish "that a statement of the doctrine," which he professes to hold, more entirely accordant with the facts of the case, had been substituted in lieu of the one referred to,—that in point of fact the statement given is certainly in the sense, and almost in the very words of Scripture, 2 Thess. ii. 13, "God hath, from the beginning, chosen you (the brethren beloved of the Lord) to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The doctrine as stated, and to which the wish of the author refers, most entirely harmonizes with this Scripture,—that it is a choice from the beginning, an election to "salvation," in all its parts completed, crowned with the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the very doctrine of Rom. viii. 30.

3. We know of no one passage, and can find no shadow of Scriptural authority, for the assertion that "in strict accuracy it cannot be said that God directly decrees that any man shall believe the gospel, and persevere unto the end, and inherit eternal life." The very reverse of this assertion is proved by the two passages now quoted.

4. Neither can we find a vestige of Scriptural authority for the assertion that "in strict accuracy," or in accuracy of any kind, the doctrine of election, according to the word of God, is "that he (God) determines to visit him (any man) with that special influence of the Holy Spirit which will certainly secure those delightful results."

5. Though such determination is in the decree of election, we can see nothing in the reason of the case more than in Scripture, for holding that the decree of election does not include the whole work of Christ, as well as the application of that work by the Spirit of God. To assert the contrary, is to say that God's purpose of election does not embrace the foundation of the whole. In short, this mode of stating the doctrine of election cuts off the *beginning* and the *end*, and sadly mangles the middle; in a way, in a word, unworthy of God.

6. And but to save another doctrine equally defective, we could hardly imagine any one attempting to maintain it.

The doctrine of election as asserted by this author is neither more nor less than that of the Arminians, condemned by the Synod of Dort as follows. In the rejection of errors on predestination, Article II., they condemn those "who teach that the election of God to eternal life is manifold; one general and indefinite, another particular and definite, and this again, either incomplete, revocable, not peremptory, or conditional; or complete, irrevocable, peremptory, or absolute." "Likewise that there is one election to faith, another to salvation; so that there may be election to justifying faith, with peremptory election to salvation. For this is a comment of the human brain, devised without the scriptures, corrupting the doctrine concerning election, and dissolving this golden chain of salvation! "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. xiii. 30.

The above application in the passage quoted, of the saying, "God does what he decrees, and decrees what

he does," is as novel as it is in reality unintelligible.

On the doctrine of reprobation, as stated in the Confession of Faith, previously quoted, little requires to be added.

It being admitted that all men are by nature in a state of sin, meriting condemnation; it being admitted that God might have justly left *all* men in this state, we can never discover that any objection can lie against the procedure of God, in determining to save some of them, while he determines to punish the rest. The whole reasons of the case we may not know. But there is nothing in the case itself which entitles any one to deny it, notwithstanding all evidence to the contrary. Some deny the doctrine in question, on the ground that it is absurd to decree a negative. But with all deference, it is not a negative at all. But a positive "ordaining to wrath *for their sin.*" The election, (the Electi—Greek *ἡ ἐκλογή*) hath obtained it, and the rest (Reliqui, *οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ*) were not only blind, but *blinded*. We read of "names written in the Book of Life," and names "*not written* in the Book of Life," of those "given" by the Father to Christ, and those "not given." In other words, God ordained them to wrath for their sin, and to that wrath He left them. If any one ask, But how do you account for the existence of sin? We reply, "We are not careful to answer you in this matter." And would ask in return, How do you, on your theory, account for the existence of sin, consistently with the being and perfections of God? All we are careful to maintain is, that sin is of the creature, salvation is of God.

CHAP. IV.

EXTENT OF REDEMPTION.

WE come now to consider the doctrine of man's inability in relation to the work of Christ in the redemption of his people.

The whole subject of the redemption of Christ, in relation to this subject, is one of deep importance and of great extent. It is only a very cursory and imperfect view of some of its leading features we can possibly present here. On the same ground of man's utter inability to originate his salvation, and which renders it absolutely necessary in the view of our reason, that it must originate with God, and that none do or can obtain it, but such as be elected from all eternity, are we, at least, forced to come to the conclusion, that the redemption of Christ, in other words, the medium through which this eternal design is carried out, must be of the same extent and efficacy; that if any are saved, it is because the work of Christ was designed to be effectual to that end, and that if any perish, it is because it was not designed to be effectual for their salvation. It is only thus that a redemption of sinners in the condition man has been proved to be, can be accomplished and secured. In relation to all the parts of it, in its origin, fulfilment, reception, and application, it must be of God and not of man; and must partake of the efficiency, definiteness, completeness, and certainty, which essentially belong to all the works of God, and we would deem it strange indeed if in the most wonderful of his works

it were otherwise. We hold therefore as the co-relative of the doctrine of election, as previously stated, the doctrine also of particular redemption, viz. "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ; by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." The doctrine we maintain, therefore, is that God having an eternal purpose of saving the elect, and the elect only, and having a purpose to save them through the redemption or work of Christ, that the redemption, or work of Christ, as a saving work, was originally designed to extend, and in fact does extend, as such, to the elect only.

We prefer using the phrases, work of Christ, redemption of Christ, death of Christ; and to make the question rather a question as to the extent of redemption, universal or particular, than to use the phrase extent of atonement; simply for this reason that we observe that modern writers, who view the death of Christ only, as an expedient by which the public justice of God is vindicated, and by which God may consistently pardon, and save all, while it does not secure the salvation of any; which latter is secured by the purpose of God to apply the death of Christ, to the elect, use always the word atonement; obviously, because the word redemption would not consort with their scheme, it being a word

that implies not merely the work of Christ done, but the work of Christ applied, carried into effect throughout till its consummation, in the final salvation and glorification of his people, to the glory of God the Father. Now we think we may safely affirm that the atonement, or death, or work of Christ, as meritorious to salvation, is never used in the Scriptures in this simple sense of an expedient for the vindication or display of public justice; but in the sense of the word redemption, in the complex sense of a medium efficient to the end, viz. the salvation of God's chosen people, actually and truly, implying and involving that end. That in this complex sense, it implies the maintenance and display of the justice of God, we not only admit, but believe and affirm. But that it does so as involving and implying the salvation of the elect, and that this is its end, object, and effect, to the glory of God. That the death of Christ may be spoken of simply as a fact, we see no reason to deny. But when spoken of as a display of righteousness, it is as a display of righteousness *in the salvation of the chosen people of God*. We hold therefore that this was the end of the death, the work, the redemption of Christ; and that in any and every sense involving and implying this end as actually attainable, it was not for all men, but for the elect only. "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven *for all those whom the Father hath given to Him*." This statement involves both the doctrine of Christ's death as a price

and satisfaction for sin, and the extent of it, being a satisfaction to the law and justice of God for the sins of his people, given to Him in the purpose and decree of God ; that this satisfaction according to the eternal covenant, is offered in the room of the guilty by Christ, as their covenant head and surety ; that He was so appointed of the Father, to bear the sins of his people ; that Christ the mediator undertook this work to satisfy divine justice as the surety of his people, and with this sacrifice, God was well pleased.

We may here state what we mean by the satisfaction of Christ in the words of Owen :—

“In the business in hand, the debtor is man ; he oweth the ten thousand talents, Mat. xviii. 24. The debt is *sin* ; “forgive us our debts,” Mat. vi. 12. That which is required in lieu thereof, to make satisfaction for it, is death ; “in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,” Gen. ii. 17. “The wages of sin is death,” Rom. vi. 23. The obligation whereby the debtor is tied and bound, is the law ; “cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them,” Gal. iii. 10. ; the justice of God, Rom. i. 32 ; and the truth of God, Gen. iii. 3. The creditor that requireth this of us, is God ; considered as the party offended, severe judge, and supreme Lord of all things. And that which interveneth, to the destruction of the obligation, is the ransom paid by Christ, Rom. iii. 25. “God set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”*

“The purpose of God according to election” must “stand.” That purpose is to *save* his people. To this purpose must the whole plan and work have immediate formal respect. That there were, or may not be relative or collateral and subordinate ends, is a point having no actual necessary bearing on the great original, direct, ultimate purpose, the *salvation* of God’s peo-

* Death of Death, Edin. 1755, pp. 147-8.

ple. This was the purpose or proposal of God in the covenant of redemption on the one hand, and this on the other, was the undertaking accepted by Christ as the surety of his people. "Lo, I come ; in the volume of the book it is written of me ; I delight to do thy will, O my God." Hence Christ himself declares, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me;" that he came to finish the work the Father had given to Him, and to give eternal life to as many as God had given Him. And again, Gal. i. 3—5, we read, "grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, *according to the will of God and our Father.*" Nothing can more distinctly declare that the redemption of Christ is not only accordant with, but according to the will of God, in all respects, and to all ends and effects; that it is co-extensive with his purpose,—"*according to the good pleasure of his will.*" That undoubtedly is not a purpose *to save* all men, but to save some; a certain chosen and determinate number. This is argued not only from the doctrine of election previously illustrated, but from the admitted fact that all are not saved, and the absurdity and impiety of affirming, that though all were not saved in fact, yet God designed they should be conditionally saved; a doctrine destructive not only of the purpose but foreknowledge of God ; and which puts the creature in the throne of the Creator. We shall not stay to argue the point, but would only state here, that this conditional salvation, besides being unintelligible and no salvation at all, is inconsistent with the one covenant of redemption in Christ, and would require another.

It would require also a separate kind of work in the mediator suited to the lame and defective purpose and effect ; an inferior satisfaction, and in point of fact, it is an inferior kind of satisfaction, as we shall afterwards see, that is proposed by its advocates. Besides it is inconsistent with the express description of the redeemed, “those that thou hast given me ;” “my sheep,” and the like, a “little flock.” “Fear not, little flock, it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Nevertheless, though styled a “little flock,” comparatively with the world, they are “a multitude which no man can number, redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ;” not all of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; but a multitude, actually redeemed *out* of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. The redeemed sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, the song of actual redemption, and they ascribe it to the peculiar love of God, to redemption *by his blood*. If it be a conditional redemption for all, it were a contradiction, at least an annihilation, in terms to speak of peculiar love in redemption at all ; and the song of the redeemed might cease ; and it has been very shrewdly remarked on the words, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests unto God,” that while the two points, the work of redemption, and the being made kings and priests are of equal extent, the denial implies this consequence, that then this song might be divided and some might say, “Thou hast redeemed us, but we are not made kings and priests unto God ; which would look most unlike the language of a redeemed sinner, and weaken exceedingly

the consolation of the redeemed, who could not be so comforted in Christ's laying down His life for them, as they are holden forth to be in this song, if it were possible that the parts thereof could be divided."*

Before proceeding farther with this subject, it may be proper to make the following statements :—

1st. We not only admit, but maintain the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ ; in dignity, worth, and value, for redeeming all and every individual of the human race, and for myriads of worlds besides, had it so pleased God to appoint, to will and determine in the covenant of redemption. On this point we would quote the following passage from Owen :—

“ Now the infinite value and worth which we assert to be in the death of Christ, we conceive to be exceedingly undervalued by the assertors of universal redemption : for that it should be extended to this or that object, fewer or more,—we showed before to be extrinsical to it ; but its true worth consists in the immediate effects, products, and issues of it,—with what in its own nature it is fit and able to do : which they openly and apparently undervalue, yea almost annihilate.—For they use those expressions concerning it, viz. That by it a *door of grace was opened for sinners* ; where (I suppose) they know not ; but that any were effectually carried in at the door by it, that they deny. Also, *That God might if he would, and upon what condition he pleased, save those for whom Christ died* : but that a right of salvation was by him purchased for any, they deny. Hence they grant, that after the death of Christ—*God might have dealt with man upon a legal condition again : likewise that all and every man might have been damned, and yet the death of Christ have had its full effect* ; as also moreover, *that faith and sanctification are not purchased by his death* ; yea, no more purchased for any (as before)

* Durham on Revelation.

than what he may go to hell withal. And divers other ways do they express their low thoughts, and slight imaginations, concerning the innate value and sufficiency of the death and blood-shedding of Jesus Christ. To the honour then of Jesus Christ our Mediator, God and man, our all-sufficient Redeemer, we affirm,—that such and so great was the dignity and worth of his death and blood-shedding, of so precious a value, of such an infinite fulness and sufficiency was this oblation of himself; that it was every way able and perfectly sufficient to redeem, justify and reconcile and save, all the sinners in the world,—and to satisfy the justice of God for all the sins of all mankind, and to bring them every one to everlasting glory.”*

Though thus sufficient, it may neither be, in intention, or in fact, a sacrifice or a salvation for all. We see this distinction in the works of creation and providence, as well as of redemption. No one will deny that God is able to do a multitude of things, both in the works of creation and of providence in his moral government of the world, which yet he does not do nor intend to do, and which are nevertheless within the compass of his power to do, and which we might think it desirable and right he should do. All we can say in both cases is, “Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.” The whole question then reduces itself to one of fact, as the scripture, or in other words, God is pleased therein to unfold it.

2nd. We believe that Christ as man, subject to the law of love, did in a holy manner love all men as his neighbours, heartily wished them well, seriously lamented the ruin of those who perished, who yet, as God, he knew were reprobates, and for whom as mediator, he had not engaged: yet so that he submitted this human affection, commanded by the law,

* Death of Death, p. 190.

which is common to Christ and to us, to the divine appointment, and restricted it to the purpose of the decreeing will of God, in this manner proving the holiness of his will in the glorifying of the divine counsel in the due subjection thereto.* An instance of this we have in the case of our Saviour's weeping over Jerusalem.

3rd. While we deny that any saving or eternal mercy is procured to the reprobate by the death of Christ, or that he can in any proper sense be called their Redeemer, nevertheless we admit that the suretyship and satisfaction of Christ have been the occasion of much good even to the reprobate, and which good, but for Christ's mediation, they could not have enjoyed. And though we do not admit that the heathen world are under an universal law of grace, yet it seems undeniable that, because of the covenant of redemption, a season of forbearance is extended to the reprobate. There seems a necessity for this in the nature of things. "God, in sparing the world, had a design of mercy upon some, and many of them were to proceed from some of the worst of sinners. He designed to save some in all ages, and in most places. Their progenitors must therefore, of necessity, be kept alive. He bears with the provoking carriage of evil men, because out of their loins he intends to extract others, whom he will form for the glory of his grace."†

* Witsius.

† See a very able chapter called a "Digression," in Halyburton on Deism, "Wherein an attempt is made to account for the occurrences that have the most favourable aspect to them (the heathen), without supposing any intendment or design of their salvation."

We cannot better state this subject than in the words of Durham on the Revelation, p. 211:—

“ We say, that yet many reprobates do here in time enjoy many things, which they had never enjoyed, had not Christ suffered. Of these, Christ’s death may well be called the cause (*sine qua non*) or, without which these had not been enjoyed : such are the preaching of the gospel, and the glad tidings of the conditional offer of life which is made in it ; yea, it may be, that the keeping off many temporal judgments and eternal also for a time, doth flow from this : whereby (as it were by the gardener’s intercession, Luke xiii.) the cutting down of many a barren tree is for a time suspended, that thereby the glory of grace may be the more manifested, the honour of the Mediator the more highly advanced, and in the close, the glory of spotless justice made the more clearly to shine, because of their greater inexcusableness. This cannot be denied to follow upon Christ Jesus’ sufferings, in so far as they necessarily follow upon the agreement wherein they were transacted, and upon the promises made to him in the covenant of redemption ; unto all which, his sufferings are presupposed as the stipulation upon his side ; now, it being certain that there are some elect ones given to him by that covenant in all ages of the world, and that he hath a visible church and ordinances granted to him for the ingathering of them, which is so and so to be administrated, to wit, by gathering under ordinances both sheep and goats, and such like ; it must necessarily follow upon the supposition of this transaction in these terms, that the world must continue for so many ages that the gospel should be preached in such and such places, and at such and such times, that such and such lights should shine for holding forth clearly the truth of the gospel ; yea, that such and such common gifts should be bestowed upon many reprobates for the adorning of this visible church, the honour of the head thereof, the furtherance of the edification of the elect, and many other things necessary for the attaining of the ends foresaid. And according to the former supposition, these cannot be denied to be decreed in the counsel of God, and contained in the covenant of redemption, largely taken ; because accidentally

(to speak so) and by reason of the manner of administration concluded, they conduce to the honour of the Mediator, and to the furtherance of his design, which is to have the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand."

It will be observed that the blessings purchased to the redeemed by the death of Christ, are the fruit of Christ's death in a way far otherwise than the common blessings above specified are the fruits of his purchase to the non-elect. In subordination to the glory of God, these blessings are purchased for the elect. Yet it cannot be said that common blessings are purchased for the reprobate in the same way, and for their ultimate advantage, as such an effect in the end doth not result. These blessings are rather consequents than effects and fruits of the death of Christ, properly so called. Whatever Christ hath purchased for the elect, he hath purchased by satisfying and meriting in their room and stead, bearing the curse due to their sins. So that the forbearance of God, preaching the gospel, and the enjoyments of all the means of grace, are not only consequents, but fruits and effects, guaranteed to them in the everlasting covenant.

4th. That, however, the obedience and sufferings of Christ are of such inestimable value, that all men without exception, who come to him, may find perfect salvation in Him, and it was the will of God that this truth be proposed to all, with a charge not to neglect so great salvation, but to come to Christ; and that a sincere declaration be made that all who come to Him shall be saved. This is not imaginary comfort, but real and solid, while the declaration that salvation is provided for all, but sure to none, is

hollow consolation indeed, and to a troubled, anxious believer, the way to despair.

5th. But that Christ, according to the will of God the Father and his own purpose, did neither engage nor satisfy, and consequently, did in no manner die, but only for all those, and those alone, whom the Father gave Him, and who are actually saved. This is altogether a different question from that of the sufficiency or value of Christ's death, meaning thereby his redeeming work, to save all men. We have already declared our belief of its entire sufficiency : but it is a different question whether it was designed to be available for all men. According to our present statement it was not. But all who were chosen to be God's people, shall be saved ; and all who shall be saved have been chosen to salvation. The two things go together, and might almost be said to be one and the same thing.

We shall adduce a few Scriptural proofs in support of our statement.

The following text, we apprehend, is a clear proof of the doctrine now stated : Gal. i. 3, 4, " Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, according to the will of God and our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." It seems only on this view of the subject, that the everlasting glory of the Redeemer's work can be ascribed to God, even our Father. Whatever God the Father willed or purposed, that Christ died to accomplish, and no more. This has, in our mind, the force of a self-evident proposition. The will of God, then, was to redeem his elect people, to redeem them from this present evil world. It cannot be said of all men, or even of the majority of men, that they are re-

deemed "from this present evil world." Either then God's purpose and will failed of effect ; or he purposed or willed only the salvation of those called "us" in this text : viz , his elect people. And Christ died to redeem *them according* to that will. His death was sufficient for all men ; but the end of his death was not all men, but those who are "redeemed from this present evil world," "according to the will of God."

Again : Was it the intention of Christ the Son, or the object for which power was given him over all flesh, to give eternal life, then it was to as many as the Father had given him, John xvii. 2.

Again : When Christ is said to be made perfect through sufferings, as was suitable to him "by whom are all things, and to whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory," then these sons are said to be "the children whom God hath *given him*." There is an entire harmony between the forgiving mercy, or pardoning act of the Father, and the dying act of the Son. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died ; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The following passage, John vi. 38, 39, is most express : "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me ; . . . that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." Here Christ expressly declares he came down from heaven to do the will of him that sent him. What is that will ? Is it that he should save all men, and not lose one of them ; and should die to redeem every one of them ? This must have been the case, if the

notion of those who say that Christ died to save all men, without exception, be true. But what saith our Lord? ver. 39, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that *of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing.*" If any one of them are lost, then it would follow that he had not accomplished the will of Him that sent him; and that he had come down from heaven for a purpose he did not, or could not effect.

The same truth is most clear, that the purpose of God, and the design and work of Christ, entirely harmonize, from Eph. i. 4—7: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." No words could more definitely declare that the same persons who are chosen are redeemed, and that those redeemed were first chosen.

1. There is a choice to holiness before the foundation of the world.
2. A predestination to adoption.
3. An end, the praise of God's glorious grace.
4. An acceptance in that grace, in the Beloved.
5. Redemption in the Beloved.
6. Through the blood of Christ.
7. All bounded by, and included in the everlasting grace of God, in a way worthy of unsearchable wisdom.

While these fruits are included in the purpose of God, the negation of them is referred to the same purpose of God. Thus John x. 26: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I

said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I give unto them eternal life : and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave me them is greater than all." When it is said, John xii. 32, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," it is explained to mean not every individual of the human race, which does not take place ; but his own chosen people, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, by these words, John xi. 51, 52, "That Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should "gather together, in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad," those "predestinated," as Paul expresses it, "unto the adoption of children." Truly it would be a very extraordinary notion, that God who regulates the falling of a sparrow, or a hair of our heads to the ground, should not define those he was to save, and all the means and ends therewith connected ; or that the Son, who knoweth the Father, should seek to save, or intend to save any other.

"The redemption that is in Christ is absolute, certain, and complete." It does not depend on any merit in man, nor is its efficacy suspended on the will of man ; nor is it incomplete, doing something for the redeemed, but not perfecting their salvation ; but on the contrary it perfects their redemption, bringing them to glory.

But it could neither be certain nor perfect, if it be that he only procured the means or opened up the way of salvation to all men, but left it certain to none ; suspending it on their own will, or on a faith which is not the assured gift of God. Faith is the

gift of God, and wrought in the hearts of the redeemed by the Holy Spirit, on account of the Father's election and Christ's redemption, therefore called "the faith of God's elect; obtained through the righteousness of God our Saviour." "Christ's sheep hear," *do* hear, certainly hear, "his voice;" they are a willing people in the day of his power. Christ obtained eternal redemption for us, his people, that is, by his blood.

"When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." "Christ died for us *that* we should live together with Him." "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is a salvation worthy of God to promise, and of his Son to work out. An uncertain salvation, however large in promise and preparation, but dependent for completion on the humours of men, were unworthy of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost alike.

Consistently with this certainty and completeness are the promises made to Christ, of the certain efficacy of his death. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." "Thy people *shall* be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth." Is. xlix. 12, "Behold, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." What security is there if it be left indeterminate, in the purpose of God the Father, and of Christ the Son?

3. The same great truth is evident from some of

the characters in which Christ died. Such as, the Shepherd dying for the sheep ;—the Head redeeming his body the church ;—the Husband redeeming the spouse, the church ;—the Proprietor his own peculiar people ;—the Parent his children ; the sacrifice offered for the offerers ; the *surety* for those undertaken for ; all which ideas exclude all others who are not of such descriptions. Let us examine this point a little.

1st. As the Shepherd of the sheep. They are represented as his sheep, prior to their being brought into the fold, and *as his sheep* he laid down his life for them. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” He nowhere is said to give his life for the goats. There is a distinction made in the classes of mankind. He was their Shepherd by covenant, John x. 11, 15, 16 ; Heb. xiii. 20.

2nd. Loved the church as a husband and so died for it. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” Death is the result of this discriminating love, not the love the result of the death ; therefore he did not die for those who were not the church ; all do not belong to the church ; compare Acts xx. 28 ; Eph. v. 25. It may be said it is the visible church, in which there are others besides the elect ; but even though this were admitted, it will not answer the purpose, unless all and every individual of the human race were meant. But the real state of the case is, that sometimes things are said of the visible church which can be true only of the elect, the true people of God ; thus, 1 Thess. ii. 13, “God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,” and Eph. i. “According as he hath chosen us in him ;” not

all the Ephesians, though true only of the real elect people of God. Tit. ii. 14, "Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity;" they are to be a "purified people, a peculiar people, a people zealous of good works;" for these he gave himself, and this is the end. They are called his "jewels." This is pointed enough, but it may be said that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men," and the work of Christ must be of equal extent; but from the context, Tit. ii. 11, it is men of all sorts; if not, and all were designed, then the design must have failed of its effect. Does He in this way "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied?"

3d. Redeems them as children. Heb. ii. 10, "For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins."

4th. Christ died as a sacrifice. Sacrifices were offered for various parties under the law, the priests, the people, the nation, as well as individuals, but they were only available, to atone even typically, for the sins of those for whom they were specially offered. Therefore our Saviour says, "For *their* sakes I sanctify myself," set myself apart as a sacrifice, "that *they* may be *sanctified* through the truth;" He died not therefore for all mankind.

Lastly, on this part, Christ suffered as the surety of his people, the surety of those for whom He died. Let us notice the fact. He is expressly called surety,

the surety of a better covenant, Heb. vii. 22. It is not a surety to us on behalf of God the Father, but a surety on our behalf to God. When God said, "Sacrifice and offering he would not, then said He, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." I put myself in their room, the room of my chosen people; accordingly it is said, "He was oppressed and he was afflicted," or as Lowth has it, "it was exacted upon him and he was made answerable." Why so? but as our surety in our room, giving his life a ransom; and the reward of the stipulation is, "*He shall see a seed which shall prolong their days. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.*" He not only paid the debt, but secures the eternal redemption of every one for whom he was surety. Consequently he was surety for no others. Accordingly "all the promises of God are yea and Amen in Christ Jesus;"—"Sure to all the seed."

The fact then that only a certain number are saved is conclusive, as to whom Christ died to save, viz. those who are saved. Had Christ been surety of the covenant for all men, God would not have broken covenant, as Christ could not have failed; see Ps. lxxxix. 33, 34.

The original covenant of grace was not with all mankind. Few of them have heard of it, and the covenant was in a certain line, viz. that of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

4. There is an inseparable connection between the meritorious obedience and sufferings of Christ, and the effects of his death. In other words, all who are interested in the sufferings and death of Christ are partakers of the saving benefits of his death. Thus Rom. v. 10, "For if, when we were enemies, we

were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; *much more*, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth;" Gal. iii. 13—14, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." These things are not true of all men, but only of elect believers; therefore he did not die for all men.

As connected with this, we may remark that a salvation which secures no benefits would be useless, and scarcely entitled to the name, if not a total misapplication of the word. "Add, that that fictitious satisfaction for the reprobate, and those who perish, is altogether a vain and useless thing. For whom does it profit? Not certainly God, who by no act can be rendered happier than he is. Not Christ himself, who, as he never seeks them, so he never receives them for his peculiar property; and neither is he enriched by possessing them, though supposed to have purchased them at a dear rate. Not believers, who, content with their portion in God and in Christ, and fully redeemed by Christ, enjoy a happiness in every respect complete. In fine, not those who perish, who are constrained to satisfy in their own persons, for their sins to the utmost farthing. But to affirm the satisfaction of Christ to be a vain and useless thing, is absurd, and borders upon blasphemy.*

* Witsius on the Covenants, b. ii. sect. 33.

5. The intercession of Christ is founded on his sufferings and death, and is of the same extent. That is to say, He intercedes for all for whom he died, and his intercession is as complete in its extent as his death. There is not the slightest intimation in the scriptures that his intercession is more limited. The two great parts of the priestly office were, 1st, to offer sacrifice for the sins of the people, and, 2d, to offer up prayers or to intercede for them. "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." The "many" and "the transgressors," here mean the same; or if there be by possibility any difference, "the transgressors" is the more general term. Yet he intercedes for them. Again Rom. viii. 34, "It is Christ that died, who also maketh intercession for us." For the comfort of believers under the burden of sin, it is said, 1 John ii. 1, 2, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." The intercession and propitiation are of the same extent. The sense in which he is said to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world will be considered in its proper place.

We know there are some for whom we are not to pray, 1 John v. 16. And yet if *Christ died* for them, it were strange if *we* were not to *pray* for them. Again, our Lord tells us very plainly that he prayed for his own; but "not for the world." If he had died for the world in the sense of every human creature, it would be strange that he should not intercede for it; and surely it will not be pretended by any Christian that sinners *may* be saved whether he intercede for them or no. It would be most absurd to say he foresaw their unbelief, and therefore would not pray for them; and yet to say he foresaw their unbelief,

nevertheless, he died for them. What end could such dying serve but to aggravate their condemnation? According to this doctrine, their unbelief prevented the fulfilment of one part of his priestly office; but not the fulfilment of the other. It may be said, Christ prayed for those who crucified him: very true. But many of those who crucified him were converted and redeemed as God's chosen. If Christ prayed for those who are not forgiven, then it would not be true that "Him the Father heareth always." How Christ prayed for Jerusalem, we have already explained. Besides, it is expressly said, that the things of their peace were hid from their eyes. As perfect man, he fulfilled all righteousness, in praying for all the miserable; as God and man, he prayed effectually for all his people.

On this subject Owen writes as follows:—

"Now concerning the whole, some things are to be observed:

"That though the *oblation* and *intercession* of Jesus Christ are distinct acts in themselves, and have distinct immediate products and issues assigned oft-times unto them, (which I should now have laid down, but that I must take up this in another place); yet they are not, in any respect or regard, to be divided or separated,—as that the one should have any respect to any persons, or any thing, which the other also doth not in its kind equally respect: but there is this manifold union between them, viz:—

"1. In that they are both alike intended for the obtaining and accomplishing the same entire and complete end proposed: to wit, the effectual bringing of many sons to glory, for the praise of God's grace,—of which afterwards.

"2. That what persons soever the one respecteth, in the good things it obtaineth, the same, all, and none else, doth the other respect, in applying the good things so obtained; for 'he was delivered for our offences, and raised again

for our justification,' Rom. iv. 25. That is in brief: the object of the one is of no larger extent than the object of the other: or, for whom Christ offered himself, for all those, and only those, doth he intercede; according to his own word, 'for their sakes I sanctify myself (to be an oblation), that they also might be sanctified through the truth,' John xvii. 19.

"3. That the *oblation* of Christ is, as it were, the foundation of his intercession: inasmuch as by the oblation was procured every thing that by virtue of his intercession is bestowed; and that because the sole end why Christ procured any thing by his death, was, that it might be applied to them for whom it was so procured. The sum is, that the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ, are one entire means for the producing of the same effect; the very end of the oblation being, that all those things which are bestowed by the intercession of Christ, and without whose application it should certainly fail of the end proposed in it,—be effected accordingly: so that it cannot be affirmed, that the death or offering of Christ—concerned any one person or thing more, in respect of procuring any good, than his intercession doth for the collating of it. For he interceding above, for all good purchased, and prevailing in all his intercessions, (for the Father always hears his Son); it is evident, that every one for whom Christ died must actually have applied unto him, all the good things purchased by his death."*

We would recommend to the perusal of our readers Chapter viii., Book i., entitled "Containing Reasons to prove the Oblation and Intercession of Christ to be one entire mean respecting the accomplishment of the same proposed end, and to have the same personal object." These reasons are declared from Scripture declarations, the nature of Christ's priestly office, of his oblation and intercession, and from the fact, that Christ himself hath joined them together, John xvii. 4; and the apostle, 1 Cor. xv.

* Owen's Death of Death, pp. 32, 33.

17; Heb. ix. 12; and that the disjoining them cuts off all comfort from the assurance of salvation.

6. The general doctrine is evident from the fact that there are certain sins for which it is expressly declared there is no remission. It surely cannot be pleaded that it was the will of the Father, or the will of Christ the Son, that his death should be considered as having been undertaken and accomplished for the salvation of those of whom it is expressly declared, as in the case of the sin against the Holy Ghost, that for their sin there was no remission. God unquestionably not only knew, but determined, from all eternity, that for such a sin there was no remission. With what propriety of thought or language can it be said that Christ died for such sinners?

7. There is an inseparable connection, according to the Scriptures, between the death of Christ and the means of salvation.

By the means of salvation, we understand any thing in God's plan of redemption that is a medium of its accomplishment; and in this view of the means, we read of the great Agent in the application of this work, how intimately this application is connected with, and dependent on, the work of Christ: John xvi. 7, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." His going away, and his departure signified "what death he should die." The Holy Spirit's coming was the fruit of it. Without it He could not have been given to any. And it does seem a strange notion, for which no good reason can be given, as we believe there is

no shadow of Scripture-warrant for affirming, that the death, the sacrifice, is intended for all ; the fruit of it only for some. The work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit are both the work of Divine Persons, and co-extensive in value to their respective ends,—and the giving an endless extent to the one, and limiting the other, seems separating what God hath joined together, and that, as it seems to us, for the purpose of eking out a very defective human theory. All men by nature are under sin, and under the consequent curse. The first covenant gave no promise to the sinner, no faith, no repentance, no Holy Spirit. These are all blessings of the new covenant, confirmed and purchased by the blood of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit which creates (for it is a creation) that Church which is purchased by the blood of Christ, and disposes all things to that end. It was by the anointing of the Holy Spirit that Christ himself, as mediator, accomplished his work ; (“through the Eternal Spirit He offered himself without spot unto God ;”) and the one purpose of God embraced the whole, and that for his elect people. The death, and the benefits of the death of Christ, are one gift of God,—one result of an eternal purpose of love to his people in Christ. And it is plainly intimated in the word of God that the Holy Spirit is engaged in the economy of redemption to fit and prepare and bring to glory those, and those only, whom Christ redeemed with his precious blood. Gal. iv. 4, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba,

Father." Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The death of Christ, his being "made a curse for us;" and the application of it, "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," have evidently one and the same end, and no more—the redemption of his people. Through the same work of Christ, and through the same Spirit, it is, that faith and repentance are obtained. They are efficacious to the same ends, point to the same events. 2 Pet. i. 1, "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 29, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ"—that is, for the sake of Christ—"not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake." The graces of faith and of patient suffering are given through the merit of Christ. Christ is called the author and finisher of our faith, Heb. xii. 2. On this Owen says:—

"He is so, and he alone is so. And he may be said so to be on various accounts: 1. Of procurement and real efficiency. He, by his death and obedience, procured this grace for us. It is given unto us on his account, Phil. i. 29. And he prays that we may receive it, John xviii. 19, 20. And he works it in us, or bestows it on us, by his Spirit, in the beginning and all the exercises of it from first to last. Hence his disciples prayed unto him, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke xvii. 5; see Gal. ii. 20. So he is the author or beginner of our faith, in the efficacious working of it in our hearts by his Spirit; and the finisher of it in all its effects, in liberty, peace, and joy; and all the fruits of it in obedience: for without him we can do

nothing. 2. He may be said to be so, with respect unto the *revelation of the object of our faith.*”*

Christ, as the author of our faith, hath purchased it by his blood. He is, moreover, exalted “to give repentance and remission of sins,” Acts v. In like manner it is said, that “through the will of God we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ,” Heb. x. 10.

Without these gifts and graces men could not be saved. They are not of man, but of God. They are the gifts of the Redeemer’s purchase. And if so, then Christ did not purchase a conditional or doubtful, but an actual and certain salvation. Not salvability, but salvation, and all the means thereunto.

Lastly on this part. It is not unimportant to observe that the end and design of the redemption of Christ was highly pleasing to God the Father, and the Son, and Holy Spirit. This is often indicated in Scripture: “Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. . . . He shall bring forth judgment unto victory.” At his baptism, a voice from heaven proclaimed: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” “Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God.” “God is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake.” “Wherefore (because he had humbled himself even to the death of the cross) God hath highly exalted him.” “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and then to enter into his glory?” and many other places.

This satisfaction with the work of Christ could not arise from any pleasure in the sufferings them-

* Owen on the Hebrews.

selves ; but in the end they were to accomplish in the glory of God, through the actual salvation of his people. Indeed, it is only in connection with this end that we can conceive the sufferings of Christ as a substitute glorifying to the righteousness of God at all. Let any one reflect on these sayings in regard to the work of Christ : viz., The “doing the will of him that sent him ;” “bringing many sons, even those given him, to glory.” “Lo ! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.” “His delight was with the sons of men.” “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” “He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied.” “For the joy set before him he endured the cross.” This is surely expressive of something more than the joy of the possibility of some being saved. It is the joy of the actual certainty of the ingathering of the glorious harvest of redeemed souls.

How glorifying and complete this salvation ! How glorifying to God the Father, Son, and Spirit ! How comforting to man ! What becomes of all this if Christ died for all *men*, *only that they might be told so*, while yet all men might die eternally notwithstanding ? Where were the good pleasure of the Godhead in a possible issue of this sort ? It is an idea which, for our part, we cannot attribute to God. How meagre and comfortless a possible salvation ! We would praise the Lord for actual *salvation*. “*Salvation* to our God and to the Lamb.”

Having thus given a selection from the multitude of proofs which might be adduced in support of the doctrine that the purpose of the Father and the redemption of the Son, are of the same extent, viz.,

embracing all those who shall be saved, and those only, and those certainly, we may remark,

Further: That those very passages which *seem*, from the sound of some of the words, to imply the contrary, and from which it has been attempted to deduce, the contrary doctrine, go to confirm and strengthen our proof.

But, first, we may observe, generally, in regard to them all, that they must be taken in such a sense as agrees with the express and often declared end of the death of Christ: viz., the complete salvation of his people, and never in a contrary sense,—and whenever there is a sense in which they all harmonize, that must be the true sense.

The end of Christ's death is declared in such passages as these:—"He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious Church," Eph. v. 25. That "he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:" that we "might receive the adoption of sons:" that we "might be made the righteousness of God in him:" that he "might bring us to God;" and the like. Now these ends of his death cannot harmonize with his dying for all men, and for every man in particular. For these ends most certainly are not accomplished in all men. The end accomplished, and the intention of Christ on the scheme supposed, do not harmonize. But they harmonize entirely on the scheme we have been maintaining: viz., that Christ died to redeem a chosen, certain people, whom he will infallibly, in all these ways, save and bring to glory.

Let us take some of these passages, and try them by this test. We affirm that it is declared Christ

died to redeem the whole body of the elect ; and not all and every individual of the human race, when it is said, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, “ For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” It is affirmed that the *alls* here are of equal extent. The meaning, on the contrary, we affirm, is that all for whom Christ died, were dead ; and not that he died for all who were dead. Because, 1st., It is here said, he not only died for them ; but rose again for them. Now for whom Christ rises he died ; so he rose for their *justification* ; and their justification is certain, Rom. viii. 34. And it is not pretended that he rose for the *justification* of every individual of the human race.

2. He speaks only of those who by virtue of the death of Christ, *live unto him*, ver. 15 ; who are new creatures, ver. 17 ; to whom the Lord imputeth not their sins, ver. 19 ; who *become* the righteousness of God in Christ, ver. 21. All this is true only of believers, not of all men.

3rd. In the Greek it is not all generally, but they all—these all—the all immediately spoken of, viz. believers who were to live unto God.

4th. It is confessed by the ablest Arminian writers that the death here spoken of, is the death *unto sin*, which takes place only in believers :—

“ The apostle speaks of the death of Christ, in respect of application : the effectualness thereof, towards those for whom he died, to cause them to live unto Him,—is insisted on. That Christ died for all in respect of application, hath not yet by any been affirmed. Then must all live unto him, yea live with him for evermore ; if

there be any virtue or efficacy in his applied oblation, for that end. In sum, here is no mention of Christ's dying for any, but those that are dead to sin and live to him."*

Heb. ii. 9, "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." That the expression, "every man" is universal as to those of whom the thing predicated is actually spoken, is not denied. But neither can it be denied that the phrase "every man" is often applied to any man of a particular class or description. Thus Col. i. 28, the apostle speaks of his "teaching every man, and warning every man," that is, all those to whom he preached; 1 Cor. xii. 7, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The phrase is without doubt not universal, meaning thereby any human being. Is there any thing that restricts it in Heb. ii. 9? Plainly there is: There was an evident reason in writing to the Hebrews, that he should use language of this sort, as they imagined that salvation was only to Jews. The *all* are called the *many sons* brought unto glory, ver. 10; those that are *sanctified*; his brethren, ver. 11; the children whom God hath given Him, ver. 13; those delivered from the bondage of death, ver. 13. None of these things can be affirmed of every human creature, even those who die in sin and perish. Besides he cannot be called, with any propriety, the Captain of salvation to those who are marching to hell.

1 Tim. ii. 4—6, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave him-

* Owen's Death of Death, b. iv. ch. iv.

self a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." This language is certainly plain enough, and absolute enough ; and yet not more so than the text, "all the world wondered after the beast," which has only to be repeated to suggest, what every body knows, that such universals are universals only in respect of the class or sort to which they are applied. Indeed the very phrase, "every body," which we have now used, is one of them, and all languages are full of them; and it were a waste of words to prove it in form. "The sense must be determined by other circumstances than the mere sound of the word "*all*."* As this passage is so important in this controversy we believe we cannot do better than give the whole of Owen's discussion of it.

After stating the Arminian argument deduced from it, he proceeds to answer it as follows :—

"The whole strength of this argument lies in the ambiguity of the word *all*: which being of various significations, and to be interpreted suitably to the matter in hand, and the things and persons whereof it is spoken; the whole may be granted, or several propositions denied, according as the acceptation of the word is enforced on us. That *all*, or *all men*, do not always comprehend all and every man that were, are, or shall be,—may be made apparent by near five hundred instances from the Scripture. Taking then *all* and *all men*; *distributively* for some of all sorts, we grant the whole: taking them *collectively* for all of all sorts, we deny the *minor*, viz. that God will have them all to be saved. To make our denial of this appear to be an evident truth, and agreeable to the

* Those who wish to see this point learnedly and minutely handled, may consult Owen's Death of Death, b. iv. ch. i., or Rutherford's Christ's Dying, and Drawing Sinners to Himself, p. 484, and onwards. This book is a mine of spiritual wealth, as well as an armoury of the faith.

mind of the Holy Ghost in this place, two things must be considered, *viz.* what is that *will* of God here mentioned, whereby he willeth all to be saved; and who are the *all*, of whom the apostle is in this place treating.

1. The *will* of God is usually distinguished into his *will intending*, and his *will commanding*: or rather that word is used in reference unto God, in this two-fold notion, *viz.* for his purpose, what he will do; and for his approbation of what we do, with his command thereof. Let now our opposers take their option,—in whether signification the will of God shall be here understood, or how he willeth the salvation of all.

(1.) If they say he doth it, *voluntate signi*,—with his will commanding, requiring, approving; then the sense of the words is this: God commandeth all men to use the means whereby they may obtain the end, or salvation, — the performance whereof is acceptable to God, in any or all; and so it is the same with that of the apostle in another place, *God commandeth all men every where to repent*. Now if this be the way whereby God willeth the salvation of all, here mentioned; then certainly those *all* can possibly be no more, than to whom he granteth and revealeth the means of grace: which are indeed a great many, but yet not the one hundredth part of the posterity of *Adam*. Besides, taking God's *willing* the salvation of men in this sense, we deny the *sequel* of the first proposition, *viz.* that Christ died for as many as God thus willeth should be saved. The foundation of God's command unto men, to use the *means* granted them,—is not Christ's dying for them in particular; but the *connection* which himself by his decree hath fixed between these two things, faith and salvation: the death of Christ being abundantly sufficient, for the holding out of that *connection* unto all; there being enough in it, to save all believers.

(2.) If the will of God be taken for his efficacious will; the will of his purpose and good pleasure: (as truly to me it seems exceedingly evident, that this is here intended; because the will of God is made the ground and bottom of our supplications; as if in these our prayers, we should say only, Thy will be done,—which is to have

them all to be saved : now we have a promise to receive of God, whatsoever we ask according to his will, 1 John iii. 22 ; and v. 14 ; and therefore this will of God, which is here proposed as the ground of our prayers, must needs be his effectual or rather efficacious will, which is always accomplished) : if it be (I say) thus taken, then certainly it must be fulfilled,—and all those saved, whom he would have saved ; for whatsoever God can do, and will do, that shall certainly come to pass and be effected. That God can save all, (not considering his decree), none doubts ; and that he will save all, is here affirmed ;—therefore if these all here, be all and every one, all and every one shall certainly be saved : *for who hath resisted his will ?* Rom. ix. 19. *He hath done whatsoever he pleased,* Psal. cxv. 3. *He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,* Dan. iv. 35. If *all* then here, be to be understood of all men universally,—one of these two things must of necessity follow ; either that God faileth of his purpose and intention, or else that all men universally shall be saved ; which puts us upon the second thing, considerable in the words, *viz.*

2. Who are meant by *all men*, in this place. By *all men*, the apostle here intendeth all sorts of men indefinitely living under the gospel, or in these latter times under the enlarged dispensation of the means of grace. That men of these times only are intended is the acknowledgement of *Arminius* himself, treating with *Perkins* about this place. The scope of the apostle ; treating of the amplitude, enlargement, and extent of grace, in the outward administration thereof under the gospel ; will not suffer it to be denied. This he lays down as a foundation of our praying for all ; because the means of grace, and the habitation of the church, are now no longer confined to the narrow bounds of one nation : but promiscuously and indefinitely extended unto all people, tongues, and languages ; and to all sorts of men amongst them, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. We say then that by the words, *all men*,—are here intended, only of all sorts of men ; suitable to the purpose of the apostle, which was to show that all external difference between the

sons of men is now taken away : which, *ex abundanti*, we further confirm by these following reasons, *viz.*

(1.) The word *all*, being in the Scripture most commonly used in this sense, (that is, for many of all sorts); and there being nothing in the subject-matter of which it is here affirmed, that should in the least measure impel to another acceptation of the word, especially for an universal collection of every individual; we hold it safe, to cleave to the most usual sense and meaning of it. Thus our Saviour is said to cure *all diseases*; and the Pharisees to tithe *παν λαχανον*, *every herb*, Luke xi. 42.

(2.) *Paul* himself plainly leadeth us to this interpretation of it: for after he hath enjoined us to pray for all, because the Lord will have all to be saved; he expressly intimates, that by *all men* he understandeth men of all sorts, ranks, conditions, and orders; by distributing those all into several kinds,—expressly mentioning some of them, as *kings and all in authority*. Not unlike that expression we have, Jer. xxix. 1, 2. *Nebuchadnezzar carried away all the people captive to Babylon; Jeconiah the king, and queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters and the smiths*: where *all the people* is interpreted to be some of all sorts; by a distribution of them into the several orders, cases, and conditions whereof they were. No otherwise doth the apostle interpret the *all men* by him mentioned; in giving us the names of some of those orders and conditions whom he intendeth: *pray for all men* (saith he),—that is, all sorts of men, as magistrates, all that are in authority; the time being now come, wherein, without such distinctions as formerly have been observed, the Lord will save some of all sorts and nations.

(3.) We are bound to pray for all, whom God would have to be saved; now we ought not to pray for all and every one,—as knowing that some are reprobates, and sin unto death; concerning whom, we have an express caution not to pray for them.

(4.) All shall be saved whom God will have to be saved; this we dare not deny, *for who hath resisted his will?* Seeing then it is most certain that all shall not be saved, (for some shall stand on the left hand); it cannot

be, that the universality of men should be intended in this place.

(5.) God would have no more to be saved, than he would have come to the knowledge of the truth; these two things are of equal latitude, and conjoined in the text: but it is not the will of the Lord that all and every one in all ages, should come to the knowledge of the truth. Of old, *He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; He hath not dealt so with any nation; and, as for his judgments, they have not known them*, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. If he would have them all come to the knowledge of the truth, why did he show his word to some, and not to others, without which they could not attain thereunto? He *suffered* all nations in former ages *to walk in their own ways*, Acts xiv. 16; *and winked at the times of this ignorance*, Acts xvii. 30; hiding the mystery of salvation from those former ages, Col. i. 26. And he continues the same dispensation, even until this day, in respect of some; and that because, *so it seemed good in his sight*, Matt. xi. 25, 26. It is then evident, that God doth not will that all and every one in the world, of all ages and times, should come to the knowledge of the truth; but only all sorts of men without difference: and therefore they only are here intended.

These, and the like reasons, which compel us to understand by *all men*, ver. 4; whom God would have to be saved,—*men of all sorts*; do also prevail, for the same acceptation of the word *all*, ver. 6; where Christ is said to give *himself a ransom for all*. Whereunto you may also add all those reasons whereby we before declared,—that it is of absolute necessity and just equity, that all they for whom a ransom was paid, should have a part and portion in that ransom; and, if that be accepted as sufficient, be set at liberty: paying and accepting of a ransom, intimate a commutation, and setting free of all them for whom the ransom is paid and accepted. By *all* them, can none be understood but the redeemed, the ransomed ones of Jesus Christ; such as, for him and by virtue of the price of his blood, are vindicated into the glorious liberty of the children of God: which as some of all sorts are expressly said to be, Rev. v. 9; (which place is inter-

pretative of this); so, that all in the world universally are so, is confessedly false.”*

We shall only select one other passage which seems to favour the scheme of universal redemption, and if we can satisfactorily dispose of it, we believe the principles involved in its illustration will enable any intelligent person to dispose of other similar texts on which the promoters of this scheme rest their arguments.

1 John ii. 1; 2, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” The main stress of the argument for universal redemption attempted to be deduced from this passage, rests on the words “a propitiation for the sins of the whole world,” which it is affirmed must manifestly mean every human creature. The remarks made in reference to the word “all” are equally applicable here. The word “world” is used in such a great variety of ways that no argument can be adduced from the mere word, without first ascertaining its exact meaning in the place where it is used; and this we believe will hold true, not only of the Bible, but of every language under heaven. It is used to signify the world, containing heaven and earth and all that is therein—the heavens—the habitable earth—men in the world—all men universally—many men—a great part of the world—the Roman empire—the good—the bad—the world corrupted—men’s worldly estate—the world accursed.† We have not given the

* Owen’s Death of Death, p. 252—256.

† See Owen, p. 198—200.

instances. The fact is undeniable. To insist that words are to be understood only in one meaning or shade of meaning, would make strange havoc of sacred Scripture, and of all other writings. Take some instances, John iii. 6, "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Spirit in the first place is the Almighty Spirit of God. But to affirm that that which is born of the Almighty Spirit of God is that Spirit, would be plain blasphemy. In regard to the word in hand, take John i. 10, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not."

It will not be contended, we presume, that in the first of the uses of it in this verse it means all and singular every human being ; but the habitable earth. In the second, not only that habitable earth, but the whole frame of heaven and earth. In the third it must mean unbelievers. Believers did know Him. A decree went forth from Cæsar Augustus "that *all the world* should be taxed." No one contends that this means every human creature. If not, why contend for this unlimited sense of the word in passages that would thus make for a particular theory, unless by proving such to be its precise meaning in each passage respectively ? "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The word in John i. 10, will just as easily prove that no human creature ever knew Christ, as that this will prove that Christ taketh away the sin of every human creature, either by atoning for it, or by the regeneration of his Spirit. In John xvii. the word "world" is manifestly used in various senses ; and in the 9th, 14th and 16th, verses, Christ makes a plain distinction between his own, and "the world," separating the one from the

other. He prays for the one, and not for the other. "I pray for them, I pray not for the world;" "the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world;" "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." In John vi. 51, Christ is said to "give his flesh for the life of the world." Is it contended this must mean every human being? Why then restrict it when it is said, ver. 33, "He giveth life unto the world."

Another passage much insisted on, and on no better foundation than the mere word "world," is John iii. 16. Let us quote it in connection with ver. 17, 18, 36; and see what it means, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved: He that believeth not is condemned already: He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The fundamental principle of this passage, and of which it is the confirmation, is to be found in ver. 15, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All such, the argument is, may securely expect salvation, for this was the end of Christ's death: not merely, as is affirmed, that he might die for them, but the *end* was that the world—the elect world, should be saved. It is what is in substance affirmed, 1 John iv. 9, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." The *us* and the *we* in this passage, are equivalent to the

“world” and “whoever believeth” in the other. If it be contended the word “world” means every human creature, then it implies this consequence, that it embraces those who were actually condemned, and in the place of torment, when Christ laid down his life.

It may be said that though Christ died in time, yet the transaction was from eternity. But this will not remove the difficulty. Because though it was transacted in eternity, yet it was so regulated in eternity as it should be performed in time.*

It is “asserted that the word ‘world’ never signifies the elect only in opposition to the wicked of the world ; but still the wicked of the world, in opposition to the faithful Christians.”

There can be no manner of doubt that it is applied to believers, as when it is said, “that God sent his Son into the world, that the *world* through Him might *be saved* ;” that God is in Christ *reconciling the world* to himself—not imputing unto them their trespasses—“the gospel is come into all the *world*, and *brought forth fruit*.” Which things could not be said of the universal world.

Let us now examine the passages to which these remarks have been preparatory. 1 John ii. 1, 2. It is plain the words “whole world” cannot mean every human creature, because there is an antithesis between them and another class comprehended under the word “*ours*.” There is plainly a “whole world” besides the apostle, and those to whom he wrote, referred to in the phrase “our sins.” So that the “whole world” here cannot mean every human creature.

* For a full discussion of this text, we must refer the reader to Owen’s *Death of Death*, b. iv. ch. ii.

Paul uses the expression, as we have seen, "all the world," or whole world, when he says the gospel came to it, and brought forth fruit, which could only mean believers, or the elect. John (1 John, v. 19.) says, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." The "whole world" here is exclusive of those who are of God, and therefore hath a limited signification,—and if in the one case, why not in the other? Again, the propitiation here is spoken of, as a "propitiation through faith in his blood." He is not so to every human creature. Besides, for all for whom he is here said to be a propitiation, he is said to be an advocate or intercessor. We have already seen he is not an intercessor for all and singular. He is not said therefore to be so here.

The scope and end of the apostle in this passage is to comfort weak believers under a sense of sin. And it is declared that to every such believer there is comfort, inasmuch as Christ is both a propitiation and an intercessor, and his salvation is complete and secure. To such it would be little consolation to tell them that Christ died to save Judas as well as them; for, according to the scheme opposed, this is the extent of the consolation.

But, again, while this is a sufficient consolation to the Jews to whom John wrote, and wrote as a Jew, it is very fitting to tell them that it was not limited to them, but extended to all the people of God in the same circumstances: viz., little children, whose sins were forgiven, and who had known the Father, but yet were trembling for the sins they had committed; of whatever kindred, tongue, or nation, they might be.

There are various other texts, of a similar kind, which will be found amply discussed in the works

written professedly on this subject; but these will afford a key to their explanation.

GENERAL OBJECTIONS.

THERE are certain objections, of a general nature, to the doctrine we have been endeavouring to maintain. We cannot discuss these in form. They will be found stated, and fully answered in the end of the Treatise of Owen, so often referred to in these pages. As our object is rather to meet some of the current opinions of the day, which we deem erroneous, and to defend the received doctrine of the reformed churches, than to give a regular treatise on the subjects under consideration, we believe we shall best accomplish our object by taking them up as they are presented to us by some able and popular writer of the day. The religious people of this land are not, we apprehend, in so great danger from the broad and palpable statement of Arminianism or Pelagianism: but they are in no small danger from the statement of views which, in our estimation, are, if not on the very borders, at least form very prominent and easy stepping-stones for crossing the stream; and will certainly lead those who will follow the remaining steps, full across to the enemy's territory and tents.

One of the ablest writers of this class is Dr. Payne of Exeter. His leading views are also maintained in the work of Dr. Wardlaw, previously noticed. The design of this intermediate scheme is indicated in the following passage:—"The views which I have endeavoured to lay before the reader, in reference to the

unlimited sufficiency of the atonement on the one hand, and a speciality of intention in relation to its application on the other, seem to me to exhibit the true reconciling principle between apparently opposing Scripture statements; and to constitute the middle and safe course between the opposite and dangerous extremes of Arminianism on the one hand, and ultra Calvinism on the other."

We do not think the scheme in question effects this design; and while in reality liable to all the objections on the part of Arminians, brought against those who hold the doctrine of particular redemption, it is liable to others peculiar to itself; and so far as we have observed, while it is attempted to be vindicated by general reasonings, not one single passage of Scripture is quoted in support of it. And we certainly know not one that has the semblance of supporting it. Moreover, we are greatly mistaken if in its own nature, as well as in the reasonings of those who support it, it is not essentially Arminian. We have no wish to raise the cry of Arminianism or Pelagianism against any one; but, nevertheless, they are systems of error well known; and if any do attempt to avoid their difficulties by a system which is yet essentially the same, it is quite fair and necessary to show that they make a distinction without a difference. The doctrine is stated by Dr. Wardlaw, in few words, thus: "INDEFINITE OR UNIVERSAL atonement, with GRACIOUS SOVEREIGNTY IN ITS EFFECTUAL APPLICATION."

We need not remark, after what has been previously laid down, that we do not deny the infinite value, worth, or sufficiency of the atonement to save all men; but what we contend for is, that the one

purpose of Jehovah, in the covenant of redemption, had respect to the salvation of his elect, of the elect only;—that the Father purposed to save them,—the Son undertook for them, and the Holy Spirit applies it to them. That the love of the Father, the work of the Son, and the love of the Spirit, are sufficient for all men, no more implies that they were conjointly, severally, or in part designed for all men, than that because the providential power, wisdom, and goodness of God, are sufficient to put all men, without exception, on the same temporal level, that therefore this was the design of the providence of God.

And our minds are irreconcilably opposed to a scheme which seems to us to attribute different purposes, ends, and desires, to the persons of the Godhead in the salvation of man, and to make the work of the Son larger and wider in its end than either the purpose of the Father, or the love of the Spirit.

Our meaning will better appear when we proceed, as we now do, to analyse some of the statements by which this scheme is sought to be promoted. This has been very ably done in a review of Dr. Wardlaw's work on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement. This review, it is well known, was written by Dr. William Symington. It is clear and vigorous, and, in our view, successful. We would earnestly recommend it to extensive perusal. It is published separately, and may be had of William Marshall, of this city; and if we make a few remarks on the same work of Dr. Wardlaw, or rather passages of this work, as they occurred to us in reading it, it is only that we may contribute, not an equal, but a small share in a different channel, to obviate what we consider its erroneous tendencies.

At page 8 Dr. Wardlaw says, "In all that relates to the subject of our present discussion, God is to be regarded solely in the character and relations of the righteous Governor, Lawgiver, and Judge of the universe." This idea is repeated in the course of the work in a variety of ways; and that the very purpose of the atonement, p. 17, was the manifestation of the divine righteousness in the pardon of sinners.

It has already been shown that the great purpose of God in the plan of redemption, in all its parts, was to bring many sons unto glory,—a purpose of mercy, a purpose of salvation. This Dr. Wardlaw will not deny; he says himself, "SALVATION is the lesson of the bible." Unquestionably it is; and to this end, for the divine glory, the sufferings of Christ were designed and undergone. Though in the death of Christ the righteousness of God is maintained and wonderfully displayed, yet we nowhere find in Scripture that this display of God's righteousness, as a moral Governor, was the main end. It was a manifestation of love and grace, but reigning through righteousness. Indeed, there are part of the sufferings of Christ, viz., his agony in his soul when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" which are utterly beyond the comprehension of any creature, but for which there was a necessity, in the very nature of the divine perfections, before a sinner could be saved; the end of which therefore was not limited to "impression," either of righteousness or of mercy. The external symptoms could give no adequate idea of the reality. The symptoms were awful, solemn, impressive; but the reality inconceivable. This then suggests to us another idea than that which seems the prevailing one of this writer in

regard to the atonement: viz., that as a substitutionary sacrifice, it is a satisfaction to "public justice," see p. 59, —of which "public justice" he says, p. 55, it includes "those principles which bear relation to the great general end of all government—the public good." Now this is neither the great general end of all government, divine and human, nor of any government which is an ordinance of God. The great general end of all such government is the glory of God; and it has a primary and grand respect first of all to God, to his perfections, to his glory. We do not, of course, believe that Dr. Wardlaw will deny this. At p. 60, indeed, he declares it; but then it is necessary to have it directly before the mind in considering the nature, and end, and consequent extent of the atonement; because we hold that in the nature and perfections of God themselves, irrespective of a public display, is there a necessity for a satisfaction to divine justice, before a sinner can be saved.

It is in this way we contend for the principle of commutative justice, the necessity of the debt of the sinner being actually paid before he can be saved,—not a mere display of righteousness in inflicting such sufferings on the Mediator as will declare to the universe that God is righteous; but, what is of infinitely greater moment than the opinion of the whole universe together, viz., exacting such a satisfaction as will maintain the perfection of the divine nature in the infinite mind of God himself, while it will declare alike the wondrous grace and inflexible righteousness of God to all intelligent creatures.*

* Since writing the above, we have seen the following passage from Edwards, as quoted in an able tract, by the Rev. Mr. Shaw, of Whitburn, entitled *New Theology*

We cannot help thinking that Dr. Wardlaw's notions on this point go to an extent, which we know he would repudiate with horror, to the extent of vindicating the Socinian in denying the necessity of a divine atonement at all. Because, we must confess, if the great end of atonement be a display of righteousness, not a satisfaction for a debt, such display may be made to some extent certainly; and, for ought we know, to the whole extent necessary, by a creature-atonement, because the end is "impression" upon creatures, a public display—a creature-end. Not so, manifestly, if it be viewed in the light of a satisfaction by a surety paying the debt to God, the infinite Jehovah; in short, giving to divine justice its due. A creature cannot do this for another in any degree. He cannot pay a single farthing of the vast debt, much less the uttermost farthing. A divine Saviour can do it to the utmost degree, and

Examined:—"If we consider sin as levelled against God, not only compensative justice to the sinner, but *justice to himself*, requires that God should punish sin with infinite punishment. God is to be considered, in this affair, not merely as the Governor of a world of creatures, to order things between one creature and another, but as the supreme Regulator and Rector of the universe,—the Orderer of things relative to the whole compass of existence, including himself, to maintain the rights of the whole, and decorum through the whole,—and to maintain his own rights, and the due honour of his own perfections, as well as to preserve justice among his creatures. It is fit there should be one that has this office; and this office properly belongs to the supreme Being. And if he should fail of doing justice to himself in a necessary vindication of his own majesty and glory, it would be an immensely greater failure of his rectoral justice, than if he should deprive the creatures (that are beings of infinitely less consequence) of their right."

only a divine Saviour. We cannot detect the slightest difference in principle, or we might almost say in form, between the mode of expression to which we are objecting, and that of Socinus, who affirmed that Christ died "*vice, et loco omnium et singulorum, sed tantum in bonum eorum,*"—not in the person, place, and room of all mankind, but only for their good. We do not think we are overstraining the conclusion. We think it deducible from the following passage:—

"Let it be remembered, that there is a material difference between the cancelling of a debt on payment of it by a surety, and the forgiveness of sin on account of a propitiation. The forgiveness of sin is simply the free remission of its punishment. The sinner who is pardoned, does not cease to be guilty, and to deserve the penalty. A debt of *property* may be paid by another; a debt of *obedience* never can. It is, in its very nature, intransferable. The sinner, in himself considered, can never cease to be guilty. A sinful creature may become a sinless creature. There may be an entire change in his nature. But a guilty creature can never become an innocent creature. That which has been done can never be undone; and that which has been deserved by the doing of it, can never cease to be deserved. No substitution, no atonement, can in this respect, alter the nature of things.—In these and other respects, the parallel between debtor, creditor, and surety in pecuniary transactions, and the sinner, the Law-giver, and the Mediatorial substitute in the scheme of redemption, has by many been pressed too closely, to the injury of truth.—The atonement of Christ, then, ought not, we are satisfied, to be considered as at all proceeding on the principles of commutative or commercial justice; inasmuch as the payment of debt, according to this description of justice, strictly and properly cancels claim, and leaves no room for the exercise of grace.

"Neither does the idea of satisfaction by substitutionary atonement, bear application to Justice in the *second* acceptance of it. *Distributive*, or as others designate it,

retributive justice, according to its strict requirements, admits not of substitution. It issues a righteous law, with a righteous sanction. It passes its sentence of condemnation against the transgressor of that law. It makes no mention of any possible satisfaction but the punishment of the guilty themselves,—the endurance by them of the penal sanction in their own persons. It is only by the death of the sinner himself that the proper demand of the law can be fulfilled; that the principles of distributive justice can have their due application; and that, under this aspect of it, consequently, Justice can be satisfied. According to the requisition of justice, in its distributive sense, every man, personally, must have *his own due*. But in substitution it is otherwise. There is an inversion of the principles of strict retribution. Neither Christ nor the sinner has his own due. The guilty, who, according to these principles, should suffer, escapes; and the innocent, who should escape, suffers. In no strict and proper sense, then, can distributive justice be *satisfied* by substitution, when its demands, instead of being adhered to and fulfilled, are, for a special purpose, and by an act of divine sovereignty, suspended, superseded, overruled.—It is well to remark, however, that, in another sense, it was satisfied; all its ends being virtually, and to the full, effected by other means.

“And this leads me to the true end of atonement. It is to *public justice*, as we have before defined it, that, in substitution and propitiation, the satisfaction is made.”*

Now, if we mistake not, two things are denied in this passage: 1st. That the guilt of the sinner can be transferred to Christ; and 2d. That Christ is the legal substitute of his people; and it is affirmed that the demands of justice are not satisfied and adhered to, but “for a special purpose, and by an act of divine sovereignty suspended, superseded, overruled.” It is admitted there is a kind of satisfaction; in other words, a satisfaction to “public justice.” This we do not hold to

* Wardlaw on the Atonement, pp. 57—59.

be a satisfaction at all, and it is a misapplication of the term. And though the sufferings of a divine Saviour be doubtless a greater display, and fitted to make a greater "impression;" yet we cannot see that on this theory a divine atonement is absolutely necessary, or how it can be maintained against the Socinian. If on a *display* of righteousness to the universe, and not on a legal satisfaction to divine justice, —a legal payment of the debt; an act of sovereignty may "suspend, supersede, overrule" its demands, we are unable to discover wherein lies the absolute necessity of an atonement by the Son of God.

But is this a correct statement of the doctrine of Christ's substitution and suretyship? We say, Unquestionably not. We affirm that the guilt of Christ's people was transferred to him as their surety, and that he was made responsible, and that it was exacted upon Him. He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." For sins not his own, but ours. This was typically represented on the great day of expiation, by the transference of the sins of the people to the head of the victim who bare them. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all;" that is, made him answerable for our guilt, exacted the legal obligation to suffer the punishment due to our sins. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "For he shall bear their iniquities." "He was wounded for our transgressions." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us." The law held us guilty, doomed to punishment. He endured this punishment for us. He blotted out the handwriting that was against us,

cancelled the obligation, so that law and justice being perfectly satisfied in behalf of his people, could exact no more of them; and therefore, for all for whom he satisfied, he satisfied for all things; so that their deliverance from guilt and wrath is not an act of sovereignty, but of justice; though to appoint and accept his own eternal Son as their surety was of free sovereign grace: and grace is not destroyed by this doctrine, as Dr. Wardlaw would assert. We are ever to bear in mind that the redeemed sinner transacts with God only through a surety; that which is justice to the surety is grace to Him, when one God is truly the creditor and surety; and even in the case of a human debtor, he would have little to boast of who spoke to his creditor through a surety. But we must beware of forgetting that the one God in covenant is in this the surety and the creditor, by a manifold and mysterious dispensation redeeming a sinner, and yet God remaining the same God. We have no difficulty in believing, we cannot believe otherwise, that Christ is in no way chargeable with personal guilt; but it is too much to assert, in the face of plain declarations of the word of God, and to the subversion of the divine atonement of Christ altogether, (and that too, as far as we can see, merely for reconciling things that may seem to us to differ) that Christ in the wisdom and grace of God the Father, and by his own voluntary undertaking, is not strictly and legally charged with the guilt of his people, of whom, as the second Adam, He is the surety and Head.

Let us hear Dr. Owen on the subject:—

“The satisfaction of Christ, by the payment of the same thing that was required in the obligation, is no way prejudicial to that free gracious condonation of sin, so often mentioned. God’s gracious pardoning of sin compriseth the

whole dispensation of grace towards us in Christ, whereof there are two parts, viz. The laying of our sin on Christ, or making him to be sin for us; which was merely and purely an act of free grace, which he did for his own sake; and then, the gracious imputation of the righteousness of Christ to us, or making us the righteousness of God in him;—which is no less of grace and mercy; and that because the very merit of Christ himself hath its foundation in a free compact and covenant. However, that remission, grace and pardon, which is in God for sinners,—is not opposed to Christ's merits, but ours; he pardoneth all to us; but he spared not his only Son, he bated him not one farthing. The freedom then of pardon, hath not its foundation in any defect of the merit or satisfaction of Christ; but in three other things, viz. 1st. The will of God, freely appointing this satisfaction of Christ, John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9. 2d. In a gracious acceptance of that decreed satisfaction, in our steads; so many, no more. 3d. In a free application of the death of Christ unto us.

Remission, then, excludes not a full satisfaction, by the solution of the very thing in the obligation; but only the solution or satisfaction of him, to whom pardon and remission is granted; so that notwithstanding any thing said to the contrary, the death of Christ made satisfaction in the very thing that was required in the obligation. He took away the curse, by "being made a curse," Gal. iii. 13. He delivered us from sin, "being made sin," 2 Cor. v. 21. He underwent death, that we might be delivered from death; all our debt was in the curse of the law which he wholly underwent. Neither do we read of any relaxation of the punishment, in the Scripture; but only a commutation of the person; which being done, "God condemned sin in the flesh of his Son," Rom. viii. 3. Christ standing in our stead; and so reparation was made unto God, and satisfaction given,—for all the detriment that might accrue to him, by the sin and rebellion of them for whom this satisfaction was made. His justice was violated; and he "sets forth Christ to be a propitiation for our sins; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 25, 26; and never indeed was his justice more clearly demonstrated, than in causing the iniquity of us all to meet upon him. His law was broken; therefore Christ

comes to be "the end of the law for righteousness," Rom. x. 4. Our offence and disobedience was to him distasteful; in the obedience of Christ he took full pleasure, Rom. v. 17; Matt. iii. 17.

Now from all this, thus much (to clear up the nature of the satisfaction made by Christ) appeareth, viz., it was a full valuable compensation, made to the justice of God, for all the sins of all those for whom he made satisfaction; by undergoing that same punishment which, by reason of the obligation that was upon them, they themselves were bound to undergo. When I say the same, I mean essentially the same, in weight and pressure, though not in all accidents, of duration and the like; for it was impossible that he should be detained by death. Now, whether this will stand in the justice of God,—that any of these should perish eternally, for whom Jesus Christ made so full, perfect, and complete satisfaction, we shall presently inquire; and this is the first thing that we are to consider in this business."*

This view of the subject of course cuts away the foundation of the doctrine of universal atonement. Because if Christ thus died for all, it were unjust that any should perish. But this will not be pleaded, and hence the necessity in the advocates of this scheme to deny the imputation of our guilt to Christ, and if so, equally must they deny the imputation of his righteousness. If there be unreasonableness, injustice, or impossibility in the one, there are the same unreasonableness, injustice, and impossibility in the other; and if in both or in either, my hope of salvation, alas! is cut off; which God forbid. In his work, in many respects an able work, entitled, "The Death of Christ, the Redemption of his People," Dr. Marshall had unguardedly adopted the sentiments of Dr. Wardlaw and others on this subject. We notice them now, only to warn our readers that Dr. Marshall has

* Death of Death, pp. 151—153.

himself openly and candidly renounced them.* We believe it was impossible for a mind of any candour or logical precision to hold them and retain his position as an opponent of the scheme of universal atonement.

The instance of Dr. Marshall has shown that there is no middle resting place between the death of Christ being for the elect only, and the scheme of universal atonement. But we are equally convinced, and the progress of the controversy will show, and indeed has shown in the case of some of Dr. Wardlaw's disciples, that there is no resting place between universal atonement and universal redemption. The one is consistent as a scheme with itself, as a falsehood is with its consequence. But the other is like the incoherent materials of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the little stone of truth smites it all to pieces.

There are various passages throughout the work bearing on this notion of public justice, which it is not necessary we should formally take up. If the objection we have now taken to this view of the great end of the atonement of Christ, be valid, as we strongly feel it to be, it will be fatal to the scheme with all having any claim to sound Christianity. Dr. Wardlaw, we are aware, pleads the *glory of God* as the ultimate end of His procedure, and he would have an easy and ready answer at hand were we to be guilty of saying he denied it. But we must be forgiven for saying that his theory of "public justice," and the expressions he uses in support of it, present to our minds such an aspect of making the creature, rather than the Creator, the end of the divine procedure, as conflicts with all our notions of the sole, essential,

* See Remarks, pp. 57—59.

eternal supremacy, as well as sovereignty of Jehovah. The following passage will illustrate what we mean. In answering the objection that *universal atonement* implies *universal salvation*, Dr. Wardlaw says, p. 107—8, “But when atonement is viewed as having a reference to the principles of *public* justice, that is, as being intended to vindicate from all possible reflection, in the extension of pardoning mercy to the guilty, those great eternal, immutable principles of equity, of which the maintenance in their unsullied glory is essential to the rectitude of the divine government, and to the respect for its authority in the intelligent universe, it must be obvious that the objection ceases to have either force or relevancy. The atonement, in this view of it, does not bind the divine Being to the pardon of any, but secures an honourable ground, should his sovereign pleasure so will it, for the pardon of all.” In connection with this subject Dr. Wardlaw explains an expression he had formerly used, viz. “*left the divine Being at liberty*, to pardon whom he would.” He disclaims, in answer to Dr. Marshall, we believe in all sincerity, any “spirit of presumptuous irreverence” in the use of the expression. The explanation of the expression is in these words:—

“It means no more than that God is necessarily ‘righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.’ It means no more, than that the atonement is not to be regarded as involving such a ‘legal satisfaction’ as to lay the supreme Ruler under an *obligation of justice* to pardon and save all for whom it was made;—that it was of such a nature as to *leave him free* from any such obligation; free, in the exercise of his sovereign grace, to ‘have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion.’ God, assuredly, had the atonement proceeded on the principles of either *exact equivalent* or *definite destination*, would not have been thus free:—he

could not, in consistency with the principles of his moral nature, have been at liberty to withhold pardon where justice required its bestowment.—The expression objected to conveys much the same sentiment with that of Mr. Fuller, when he says, ‘he doubts whether the moral governor of the world’ should be considered as by the atonement ‘laid under any such kind of obligation to show mercy to sinners, as a creditor is under to discharge a debtor, on having received full satisfaction at the hands of a Surety.’”*

We have no inclination to use or to justify the expression “presumptuous” as applied to the sentiment in question. But we cannot help thinking the phrase itself, and some of the notions in the passages now quoted objectionable on the following grounds:

1st. To our mind the phrase “*public* justice,” as the prominent, if not primary, end of the atonement, has all the aspect of a creature end, and necessarily points the mind to what creatures may think of God, in the great scheme of redemption, rather than to what is suitable in the divine nature itself. We have an irreconcilable repugnance to this mode of speaking of Jehovah, the Only and the Supreme. “To vindicate from all possible reflection the great, eternal, immutable principles of equity,” in the sight of all creatures, if it means that it will stop the cavils even of devils, and wicked men, is an end that is certainly not attained by the plan of redemption, and not the end therefore contemplated. It is of infinitely more importance that God be just. This is the primary end; and while He is just in justifying the ungodly, He is also justified; and all holy creatures acquiesce and adore. Let wicked men or devils “reflect,” as they will, “*public* justice” is vindicated from all just reflection in the punishment of the wicked; and the

* Wardlaw on the Atonement, pp. 108, 109.

essential justice of God could not be vindicated, but in entire actual satisfaction, let men reason and cavil as they may.

2. We have no difficulty whatever as to the supreme Jehovah being under an obligation of a justice, which is the necessity of his own free, independent, eternally gracious nature, and actings. It is neither an obligation, nor a restraint laid upon Him by a creature, or by ought external to himself. It is an instance of the highest moral necessity being the highest moral freedom. We know not to what Fuller is referring in the passage quoted from him. We can understand that there are points in which the analogies between a human creditor and Jehovah will not hold. But whoever may doubt it, we have no great difficulty in understanding, and certainly not at all in believing, that God, from a necessity of nature, must be just, in the very things in which nevertheless "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy;" and if we are not allowed to hold this, we cannot for our parts discover how the Son of God, as the Mediator, God-man, was amenable to his Father's justice, and yet perfectly free and gracious in bearing our sins in his own body on the tree.

3. If the Divine Being, by the work of Christ, is not by his own gracious, sovereign counsels and actings engaged to pardon those for whom Christ died, whatever may be the effect of such a doctrine on the unbelieving world, it will be sad tidings to the "sheep" of Christ. It will cut the golden chain of the believer's security and privileges, Rom. viii. 35—39.

This whole mode of dealing with this subject, has an unavoidable air of what is to us most repulsive, that of squaring, measuring, modifying, the

divine procedure by human considerations, and for creature ends. It is the manifest and declared design of the whole scheme of salvation, that it is of God, and through God, and to God ; that no flesh should glory in his presence ; and there is nothing which for ourselves we dread more than the exaltation of the creature in the presence of God.

In some succeeding pages, Dr. Wardlaw endeavours to show, that on the ground of a general atonement for all, the offer of mercy is held out to all, "in love alone to the world, in love to mankind, independently of all secret purposes of special grace;" and argues that though there had been no "election of grace," and the universal offer of salvation, universally refused, there would still have been benevolence and love ; we presume infinite, else the supposition, and the argument attempted to be reared upon it, were alike worthless. We do not like to argue against suppositions that in themselves are neither true nor probable. Those who listen to them for the sake of argument, are forced for the sake of argument to be guilty of something like irreverence in answering them. Of such suppositions there are many examples in the work before us, as for instance at p. 133, a similar supposition is made, and where it seems implied, that God would not have been vindicated in every possible aspect of his character, in which the creature could ever have known him, though no mercy or plan of mercy had ever been revealed to the guilty. We do not think it of any great moment to answer whether there would have been love or no in the case supposed. But we confess we looked somewhat eagerly, to find the proof of "mercy infinite and everlasting," on the supposition that there had been no

“election,” and no sinner saved at all by the work of Christ.

We can see plainly enough there might have been love in a creature in the case supposed, though his plan proved a “failure.” A creature might miscalculate the obstacles, and have no power to remove them, however desirous. But we cannot apply it to Jehovah, whose plan of salvation *must* not only be the plan of infinite love, but of infinite wisdom, and infinite power, and cannot fail; and even in the case of a human being, we fear the debt of obligation would not be felt to be very great where there was the expressed love, with the pre-intimation of the deficient wisdom and power to make it effectual. Whatever might be the degree of criminality in refusing a declaration of love after this fashion, it is exceedingly difficult to discover what kind of obligation is conferred by a love, which on the supposition, is love without the application of the wisdom and power without which it must be ineffectual. Our author in pursuing this subject, we humbly think, forgets more than once the point in question, and takes for granted the thing denied—as for instance when he asks, “can there be no love in providing and offering deliverance, unless that deliverance is accepted?” And adds “when I find him (the Saviour) declaring that very love, of which the transcendent magnitude could be no otherwise expressed, than by the statement of what it had done for its objects—to have been love to ‘the world,’ and to have shown itself in the grand general provision of salvation for the world, by the mission and death of his Son; ‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him

should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world : but that the world through him might be saved,' I dare not either contradict or qualify his language." In both these passages, the thing assumed is the thing to be proved ; and though without the proof it may bind his own conscience, it cannot have the same weight with those who do not believe that there is this "grand general provision for the world," in his sense of the word "world ;" and who have good reason for believing the word "world" to be perfectly intelligible on a different understanding of it altogether.

Denying the fact of the universal "deliverance" or "salvation," offered, we would not debate about the amount of the love involved in it. Besides, the facts are in the teeth of the purpose and provision of "salvation" to the "world," in the sense he contends for. Explain it as we may, such is the result ; account for it as we may, such is the fact that multitudes perish, and therefore we do not believe the fact alleged on the other side to be a fact at all. It is admitted by the theory of "universal atonement with limited application," that there is a limited *purpose* of application ; and yet to maintain there is a universal "*provision of salvation*" seems to us, not only very like, but plainly to be a contradiction in terms. A "provision of *salvation*," without a provision of the "application" of the Holy Spirit, is to us unintelligible. Let us try this theory of "limited application," with the theory of universal atonement, by John iii. 16, as interpreted by our author. He applies the phrase "God so loved the world," absolutely to all men, both elect and non-elect. Let us

test the passage by applying it in its absolute sense to each severally, as well as conjointly—thus, God so loved the world that the elect who believe by the special application of his Spirit should not perish, but have eternal life. Put it now in its absolute sense to the non-elect thus: “God *so* loved the *world*,” that the non-elect should not have this special application; but should what? Be left to perish. This might be justice, but could it be said in regard to these, “God *so* loved the world?” Or take it thus: “God *so* loved the world, as to give his Son to die for them;” but yet designed not to make his work effectual, and though he knew they would not accept it without the application of his Spirit, he so loved the world, as yet to withhold this gift. It is entirely just in God to withhold his Spirit; but how such a state of things is a wonderful display of divine love to the non-elect, we cannot conceive. We do not wish to throw an air of ridicule over so solemn a subject. But were a man to say to all the world, as a Spaniard is said to do, My house is at your service, yet if he certainly knows that the party either will not, or is so disabled, that he cannot rise off the street, to take it, and yet does not intend to extend his helping hand, you would not say this was a wonderful proof of love or generosity.

We can, however, perfectly understand how there may be absolute sufficiency in the work of Christ for all men, viewing his work as one, in all its parts; but as not being designed for the salvation of *every man universally*, in *all* its parts, so is not designed for every man universally in any of its parts; and yet the most heinous criminality resting upon the sinner, for that sin which is his own, and the exceed-

ing sinfulness of which comes out in nothing more than in its utterly disabling the soul from benefiting by the eternal compassions of Jehovah, and the glorious work of Christ ; but by an active putting forth of a divine purpose and divine power, to counteract effects, which all creation could not remedy. The sort of splitting of the divine purpose in the work of Christ, and in the work of the Holy Spirit, having different ends, and different issues, is in our view altogether irreconcilable with the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit in essence, in counsel, and in work, in the great plan of redemption. Equal glory must redound from it, in its origin, progress, and consummation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

At p. 128, Dr. Wardlaw says, the relation the “atonement bears to the obstacles which rest in themselves (sinners), is that of a MOTIVE OR INDUCEMENT TO THEIR RENUNCIATION.”

We presume this means the renunciation of the obstacles in the sinner, which exist to his salvation. If this be the relation of the work of Christ to these obstacles, it is small consolation to sinners indeed. These obstacles are insuperable by the sinner, and if the death of his Saviour has no relation to the securing the gift of the Holy Spirit, as an end of it, as a purchased fruit of the death and finished work of the Lord Jesus, it is sad, nay awful views to the sinner. It may be justice—they may—they would deserve it—but it is a perversion of all language to call it a display of love.

While we think this scheme of universal atonement, and limited application defective, and erroneous in itself, we do not see that it relieves its ad-

vocates of one single difficulty attempted to be charged by Arminians upon the doctrine of particular redemption ; and in point of fact, is scarcely distinguishable from Arminianism itself. Its chief supposed advantage is the freedom with which, it is alleged, it enables the messenger of the glad tidings to make the gospel offer. For our parts we cannot discover this. It only shifts the difficulties on one point as it respects the unbeliever; while it casts loose the elect believer on the ocean of doubt and uncertainty. The language of its supporters scarcely attempts to conceal this consequence. "There it," (the atonement) "stands,—illustriously accomplished, and graciously revealed. In itself considered, while it renders possible the salvation of all, it secures or renders certain the salvation of none. The security of the salvation of the chosen number lies, not in the atonement itself, but in the purpose of God, providing in their case for its acceptance and efficacy. This provision consists in the sovereign efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit." Now this we assert is only half the security in words ; and not half in reality. It sounds in our ears as if it severed the work of Christ from the purpose of God and the work of the Spirit. It breaks the unity in the purpose and plan of the Godhead, which is the ground of security. It deprives the believer of the security which he has in being in Christ, and Christ in God ; in being one with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Where the comfort, on this theory, in the apostle's saying, "*All things are yours, because ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,*" if in the foundation of the whole, the work of Christ, God is under no obligation, of his own free purpose, to include a single soul

in its benefits? Great comfort it would be to the man ready to be engulfed in the yawning deep, to exclaim, "Here the ship rides triumphant, the sovereign launched it for all the subjects of his empire. It renders possible the deliverance from a watery grave to all on the wide ocean who can enter it. But it cannot stretch its sails, or put forth its grappling hook to reach the drowning man, and snatch him from destruction. There it stands a noble vessel—worthy of the Sovereign; but no security that He will save any. It has a 'tried' Captain; but there is no pledge that his resources are secured for any; but all may come to Him and try, if they please. There is nothing to prevent them."

On the theory we are opposing, the atonement, the death of Christ, the work of Christ, who undertakes not one part only of his people's salvation, but every part of it, is a plan to secure a free offer; but not to secure the actual gift. On the plan we advocate, the design and plan to offer a true and complete salvation, and the design and plan to secure the effect through the death of Christ, are co-effectual and co-extensive. And for what is this breaking up of the one harmoniously conspiring plan of God for the salvation of his people? That the creature may have no possible cause for reflecting upon God. Let it be remembered that the creature whose impious reflections are thus to be provided against, is already a subject of the kingdom of Satan, the enemy of God. He not only desires to remain in this condition, but hates Christ and the work of Christ, unless that very work is made effectual as the meritorious cause of the putting forth of the Spirit of Christ to restore him. Being one of Satan's ser-

vants, as such opposed to Christ, enmity to Christ, and by his own fault, it is his condemnation, not his misfortune, that he neither will nor can accept Him, and suffers aggravated condemnation for this very enmity. But to say that God designs to offer *salvation* to the sinner, which he knows he will not, and cannot accept, and which does not embrace in itself any provision for securing the will and ability to accept it, but will fearfully aggravate the condemnation of him to whom it is offered, and that for a display of righteousness to the universe, does not certainly relax the “stern features of Calvinism,” while it in reality exhibits the cruel features of Arminianism. Instead of making the aggravated condemnation of enmity to Christ to rest on man’s sin, it hands it over to the love of God, exhibited in an offer of a Christ, in whom there is no certain provision for the salvation of any. “Miserable comforters” are all at the last, who to make man’s way easy, takes it out of the hands of the great God our Saviour.*

* The following observations of Owen are most forcible and satisfactory:—

“1. No consolation can arise unto believers, from that which is no where in the *Scripture* proposed as a ground, cause or matter of consolation; as the general ransom is not: for (1.) that which hath no being, can have no affection nor operation; (2.) all the foundations and materials of consolation, are things particular and peculiar only to some; as shall be declared.

“2. No consolation can accrue unto believers,—from that which is common unto them—with those whom, (1.) God would not have comforted; (2.) that shall assuredly perish to eternity; (3.) that stand in open rebellion against Christ; (4.) that never hear one word of gospel, or consolation: Now to all these, and such as these, doth the foundation of *consolation*, as proposed with and arising

“Most abominable and comfortless,” says the eminent and pious Rutherford, “must the doctrine of the death of our Lord Jesus be, if Christ died only to be a Lord, and such a Lord as he might have power, without impeachment of revenging justice, to save men upon a new transaction either of grace or works; and to destroy his enemies that would not accept of that new transaction; yet so as when Christ hath died and taken away the sins of all, and is made Lord and king of dead and quick, all mankind may freely reject all covenants Christ maketh, or can make, and be eternally lost and perish.”*

from the *general ransom*, appertain; equally with the choicest of believers.

“3. Let a man try in the time (not of disputation, but) of desertion and temptation,—what consolation or peace to his soul he can obtain from such a collection as this: *Christ died for all men, I am a man, therefore Christ died for me.* Will not his own heart tell him,—that notwithstanding all that he is assured of in that conclusion, the wrath of God may abide on them for evermore? Doth he not see that, notwithstanding this, the Lord showeth so little love unto very many millions of the sons of men, (of whom the former collection, according to the present opinion, is true, as well as of himself); as that he doth not once reveal himself, or his Son unto them? What good will it do me, to know that Christ died for me; if, notwithstanding that, I may perish for ever? If you intend me any consolation, from that which is common unto *all*; you must tell me what it is which all enjoy, that will satisfy my desires, which are carried out after assurance of the love of God in Christ? If you give me no more to comfort me, than what you give or might have given to *Judas*; can you expect I should receive settlement and consolation? Truly miserable comforters are you all, physicians of no value, *Job’s* visiters; skilful only to add affliction unto the afflicted.—Owen’s Death of Death, pp. 352, 353.

* Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself, p. 454.

This writer beautifully demonstrates that Christ is King and Lord, not that he might have power to destroy all his subjects, but to save his people, Ps. lxxii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 7, 8; Luke i. 69, 70, and many other passages. And adds, "SALVATION is engraven on the crown of Christ. By office, Christ must be a destroyer, and a Lord-crusher of his people, as a Jesus and a Saviour by this conceit." Again, "And what more contrary to the intrinsical end of Christ's death than that he should obtain no other end by dying but a placability, a possible salvation, a softening only of God's mind, by which justice should only stand by, and a door be opened whereby God might be willing, if he pleased, to confer salvation by this or that law, a covenant of grace or of works, or a mixed way, or by exacting faith in an angel, or an holy man,—and this possible salvation, this virtual or half reconciliation, doth consist with the eternal damnation of all the world. Whereas the genuine con-natural end of Christ's death is, John x. 10., 'That his sheep may have life, and have it more abundantly.' He suffered 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,' 1 Pet. iii. 18. And in the very act of suffering, (to speak so) or in that he was stripped and died, 'the chastisement of our peace was upon him,' Is. liii. 5. This cannot be such a possible heaven, a fowl flying in the air, a *may-be* as far off as a *never may-be*, which may consist with an inevitable hell. So as Christ died not, but on a poor *hopeless venture*, and a *forlorn contingency*, that might as soon fill hell with the damned souls of all the world, as grace paradise with redeemed ones."*

* Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself, pp. 457, 458.

There is no middle resting-place between the redemption of Christ as the salvation of the elect, and the wide scheme of universal redemption. Events and facts are proving it every day. We could point to instances, but the intelligent reader will not be at a loss to find them. If there can be no consistent ground of universal offer where universal atonement has not been made, all the wit of man will not show that there can be a consistent ground of universal offer where no provision for "special application" has been made. And whatever may be said of an offer in such circumstances, it cannot be said it is one of everlasting mercy. On this scheme we should like to hear a sermon on the love of God, divided into the heads, eternal, disinterested, efficacious, fruitful in blessing to the sinner. The paragraph, p. 123, of Dr. Wardlaw's work, which winds up thus, "'That the only consistent ground, therefore, for universal invitation, is universal atonement,'" would, on his principles, sound in due consistency with itself; and by the substitution of one word for another: viz., the word "redemption" for the word "atonement," implying in the word "redemption," universal application.

We have said that the scheme in question does not relieve its advocate from any of the difficulties alleged by Arminians against the scheme of particular redemption, while yet it is scarcely distinguishable from Arminianism itself. A bad name is not an argument. But if a theory is put forth on the ground of its avoiding the difficulties of what is called "ultra Calvinism," without falling upon the Scylla of Arminianism, we are certainly entitled to see that it is not the old Arminian way after all. And we have

more than a doubt that the *via media* pointed out, is not yet the *via tuta*,—that the channel is too narrow, and the bold front of the Arminian Scylla will cause the shipwreck of the unwary who venture upon it. It is exactly the old Arminian distinction of *impetration* and *application** thus stated by Owen:—

“They say then, that in the oblation of Christ, and concerning the good things by him procured, two things are to be considered: first, the *impetration* or obtaining of them; and secondly, the *application* of them to particular persons. The first (say they) is general, in respect of all; Christ obtained and procured all good things by his death, of his Father,—reconciliation, redemption, forgiveness of sins,—for all and every man in the world; if they will believe and lay hold upon him: but in respect of *application*, they are actually bestowed and conferred but on a few; because but a few believe, which is the condition on which they are bestowed. And in this latter

* It was so held by all the reformed churches. It is very strongly condemned in a letter to the Synod of the French Protestant Church held at Alanson in the year 1637, written by the pastors and professors of Geneva, “touching the doctrine and books of the Sicurs Amyraud and Testard.” They speak of it thus:—“Besides the sad example of our neighbour-provinces, who have suffered this canker to fret into their bowels, should oblige us to keep this poison at the greatest distance from us. For since we have once agreed, and seriously and sincerely consented unto the faith and canons of the holy Synod of Dort, both by word of mouth and our own manual subscription, it seems to us that we cannot recede from it without offering a most notorious injury to all the Reformed churches.” They proceed to repudiate for themselves and their Swiss brethren the opinions of those they call the *novelists*, and earnestly beseech the Synod to take measures for repressing them, and particularly to guard the youth, training for the ministry, from being infected by them.—Quick’s Synodicon, vol. ii. p. 400.

sense are the texts of Scripture, which we have argued, all of them to be understood : so that they do no whit impeach the *universality of merit*, which they assert ; but only the *universality of application*, which they also deny.—Now this answer is commonly set forth by them in various terms, and divers dresses : according as it seems best to them that use it, and most subservient to their several opinions. For,

“1. Some of them say, that Christ by his death and passion, did absolutely, according to the intention of God, purchase for all and every man, dying for them, remission of sins and reconciliation with God ; or a restitution into a state of grace and favour : all which shall be actually beneficial to them, provided that they do believe. So the *Arminians*.

“2. Some again ; “that Christ died for all indeed : but *conditionally* for some, if they do believe, or will so do, (which he knows they cannot of themselves) ; and *absolutely* for his own, even them on whom he purposeth to bestow faith and grace,—so actually to be made possessors of the good things by him purchased. So *Camero*, and the divines of *France*, which follow a new method by him devised.”*

Under the head De Redemptione, the Synod of Dort rejected the Errors of the Arminian Remonstrants, I. “Who taught, that God the Father destined his Son to the death of the cross, without any certain and definite design of saving any one by name, so that for the impetration of the death of Christ, its necessity, utility, dignity, might stand good, secured, and perfect, complete and entire in its value, even though the redemption obtained should never have been applied to any individual.†” II. “Who taught that this was not the end of the death of Christ, that he should in

* Death of Death, pp. 88, 89.

† See on this subject “Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself,” by Samuel Rutherford, 1777, pp. 434—458.

reality ratify the new covenant of grace with his blood, but only, that he might acquire a bare right for the Father, of finally entering into any covenant, either of grace or of works." We can discover in these two passages no substantial, and scarcely any formal difference between them and the doctrine of "universal atonement with limited application," and "leaving the divine Being at liberty to pardon whom He would." There are other heads condemned by the Synod of Dort, which more than half are made up of the very same elements as those we are opposing. We would close this line of remark by the following quotation in proof:—

"The advocates of universal atonement are divided among themselves. Some of the ablest of their number contend for what is called the *indefinite* atonement—the atonement *per se*—the atonement which has no reference to persons, elect or non-elect, and which makes satisfaction only to public justice—the justice by which the law is not fulfilled or magnified, but only 'suspended, superseded, overruled.' This opinion some of us were inclined to regard as new; but I now find, what many must have been aware of before, that it is only an old opinion revived. Traces of it are to be found—not faint or doubtful, but most unequivocal traces, in the writings of several of the early Arminians, particularly in the writings of Episcopius and Curcellæus, two individuals of great celebrity, who, while they defended Arminianism out and out, were generally understood to go a step farther. 'God, as the supreme and absolute Lord,' says Episcopius, 'had power to forgive sins, without any satisfaction, but he wished a sacrifice to be offered for sins, in order to show that in extending favour to sinners, he did not overlook his justice.' 'By the intervention of a propitiatory sacrifice,' he says again, 'he might satisfy justice *in a certain way*—that is, he might satisfy the love with which he loves righteousness, and the hatred with which he hates sin; and he might also satisfy justice, by requiring repentance,

as a condition of pardon.' 'If by satisfaction,' says Curcellæus, 'you mean that Christ, properly and without a figure, endured the punishment of our sins, such satisfaction, I tell you, is unknown to the Scriptures.' 'The justice of God did not permit that he should pass by men who were guilty, and punish Christ who was innocent. Your reply is, that Christ was a surety; but sureties are admitted only in pecuniary matters, not in matters of criminality.' **

To a creature such as man, utterly guilty and helpless, it is only a salvation complete and perfect, fully wrought out in and by Christ, and secured to the sinner, in the purpose and plan of redemption, that is adequate to his condition and wants; any thing less is no consolation to him, because it can be no salvation. Nothing but life, eternal life in all its parts, complete and perfect in the surety, meritoriously obtained, agreeably to the eternal purpose of God, and secured in Him, and the application of it by the Holy Spirit in like manner meritoriously obtained in and by the Surety, is adequate to the emergency; and blessed be God that it is *salvation* in all its parts, its origin, its working out, its application and final consummation, and not a salvability securing the consummation to none, that is the gift of God to his elect, and the purchase of the Redeemer's blood for his peculiar people. O this is comfort indeed! Life to the dead, Life from the dead! "Our life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." Take from us this perfect suretyship, this perfect vicariousness of Christ's work, and we could not but lament, "our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts."

* Dr. Marshall's Remarks, &c. pp. 65—67.

CHAP. V.

MAN'S INABILITY IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WE come now to consider the doctrine of man's inability in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit.

We firmly believe that the views we hold on these points will powerfully strengthen and illustrate each other.

We hold it as a first principle, that God must have all the glory of man's salvation, as well as of every other existing good in the universe. "For of God, and through God, and to God, are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever." This is as plainly a principle of natural as of revealed religion. No one will be so irrational as to deny that God is the immediate and Almighty Creator, or originator of all being, of all good in the natural world. We cannot discover why there should be more difficulty in admitting the same great truth in regard to the spiritual world. Or why it should be contended that there is any one field in the spiritual world, from which the immediate and direct agency of God should be excluded, and in which man should be able and free to operate, of his own unaided and independent ability; and without a direct ability given him by God, should be the originator and finisher of a spiritual temple fit for the habitation of God; and least of all can we discover why man, a sinner, and wholly depraved, can have any such power in himself.

A dead man could not put forth his hand and raise

up the materials even when already prepared for him. As little could a *dead* soul avail itself of the *means* which God hath prepared to rear a spiritual and living temple in the place of a dead soul, the palace of Satan. Life can neither be communicated nor sustained without the direct agency of God. The *means* of life may exist in abundance, but if God withdraw their breath, men die. The means may surround them in abundance, but they cannot lay hold of them and live. They must be made alive before they can lay hold of any thing. Not less true is it with the spiritually dead. Life must be communicated by a direct divine agency. It cannot possibly originate with any creature, much less with the sinner in whom there is no good thing, no life, but death, complete and entire. If the account we have given in the first chapter of man's natural condition be the true one, it follows as a necessary consequence that spiritual life, the new birth, must be the direct and immediate work of the Spirit of God. This conclusion entirely harmonizes with the word of God; and the doctrine of scripture as to the Agent and actual method of a sinner's regeneration, affords undeniable proof, on the other hand, of the truth of the doctrine we maintain as to man's inability, both natural and moral, meaning thereby in all the faculties of his soul, to any thing spiritually good.

We do not think it necessary on the present occasion to prove that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit—a divine work. This is not formally denied by any of those with whom the present controversy stands, so far as we know. Neither is it formally affirmed by such, so far as we know, that regeneration consists in a mere moral reformation of

life. It is admitted that it is something more; and yet this doctrine, as maintained by many in the denial of any internal and immediate work of the Holy Ghost, in communicating spiritual life to the soul of the sinner dead in sin, and making the whole of the Spirit's agency to consist in a mere external appliance of means, of which every sinner is able to avail himself, and thereby become a new creature, is in reality a denial of it as the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost, and implies nothing more than such a reformation, as any one can effect by the ordinary providence of God, independently of any dispensation of the Holy Spirit, or of the grace of God.

It were well then that that which men do not deny, whatever it may be, they would truly keep in mind, viz. 1. That the change by which a sinner passes from death unto life *is* truly the work of the Holy Ghost; and 2d. That it is a change that is in its nature divine and spiritual—a change in the actual state of a sinner, not a mere change of the direction in which he moves. On both these points the language of Scripture is so express and clear, that none having any pretensions to be still outside the “tents” of the Socinians do formally deny them. But because we believe there are those who deny them in reality and effect, we would entreat our readers to bear in mind the truth of scripture on these points. For the first, let these texts suffice: John iii. “Jesus answered and said unto Nicodemus, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born

of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." Hence he who is the subject of this work, is said to be born of the Spirit; and in the same Gospel, i. 13, it is said of them, they "are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There is, on the one hand, not only the positive ascription of the work to the Spirit of God, but the negative exclusion of any agency of the creature ; and as to the second thing, it is plainly declared that the effect of the operation is peculiar, that it is "a new spiritual being, creature, nature, life."*

Referring to the condition in which all men are by nature, in a spiritual point of view dead, not only under a suspension of spiritual powers, but an entire incapacity, it is called quickening, giving life. The power of giving life is exclusively ascribed to the Spirit of God. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

Once more—Titus iii. 4—6, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared ; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." It is called "a new creature," a "divine nature," a "putting off the old, and putting on the new man," "which after God is created," &c., and the like,—all which imply an *act*, not a process, of creative power ; an exertion of Almighty power which, though instantaneous, reaches

* Owen on the Spirit, book iii. chap. i. sect. 3.

to the whole man, spirit, soul, and body. Unless it were the immediate product of a divine power, even as when God said, "Let there be light, and light was," it could no more be called a new creature, than the gradual diffusion of the morning light could be called a new creature, which it could not be, however fair and beautiful.

Keeping in view, then, the state of a sinner by nature, as wholly defiled in all the faculties of his soul, intellect, will, and affections; and avoiding many preliminary and collateral questions, we proceed at once to a brief consideration of the way of his regeneration or recovery from this state, ascribed, as we have seen, to the Spirit of God. Without professing to enter into a systematic treatment of this whole subject, we may notice the leading features of the errors opposed to the doctrine of Scripture, as to the work of the Spirit of God in renewing the dead in sin. The following summary of them, as given by Owen, is not more descriptive of the errors of his own and preceding times, than it is of those of the present day. We know not whether they are to be characterized as Socinian, Pelagian, Arminian, or pertaining to some of the sects and names of greatly inferior note, who now maintain and propagate them with immeasurably less talent and learning, and yet with an air of novelty and superior piety. This, in truth, is characteristic of them all. After they are stated, the intelligent reader will have no great difficulty in detecting the heresies of the present time, as maintained by men who, we believe, have never studied at all the celebrated originals. It requires neither talent nor learning, either to receive or to originate dangerous error. The weakest and the strongest

mind, the most learned and most illiterate, unhappily, afford a soil sufficiently fitted and vigorous to the production and growth of error. "What these various parties aim at," says Dr. Owen, "may be reduced unto these heads: (1.) That God administers grace unto all in the declaration of the doctrine of the law and the gospel; (2.) That the reception of this doctrine, the belief and practice of it, is enforced by promises and threatenings; (3.) That the things revealed, taught, and commanded, are not only good in themselves, but so suited to the reason and interest of mankind, as that the mind cannot but be disposed and inclined to receive and obey them, unless overpowered by prejudices and a course of sin; (4.) That the consideration of the promises and threatenings of the gospel is sufficient to remove these prejudices, and to reform that course; (5.) That upon a compliance with the doctrine of the gospel, and obedience thereunto, men are made partakers of the Spirit, with other privileges of the New Testament, and have a right unto all the promises of the present and future life."

Any one intelligently acquainted with the opinions of those who are supposed to hold the "new views" of the present day, must be aware that they are identically these; and any one intelligently acquainted with this controversy, as maintained in former times, can give no other designations to them than those we have given: viz., Socinian, Pelagian, Arminian. And what is of more consequence for every one who has a soul to be saved to know, they amount to a denial of man's original corruption; and propose, under a show of respect to the word of God, nothing more than a human aid for man's recovery, nothing more

than the blind to lead the blind—nay, the dead to raise the dead. And if so, are alike impious, and dishonouring to God, and cheerless and ruinous to man. They may flatter the pride and atheism of his corrupt nature, but they ruin his soul; because they rest in man rather than the living God.

We may admit, and do admit, and contend, that the word of God, the whole revelation of his will, is worthy of God, and suited to man,—that the word and ordinances of God are perfectly adapted to produce the effects ascribed to them, and that man is culpably guilty in resisting them,—that in the means of grace, the word, ordinances, doctrines, promises, precepts, threatenings, the ministry and sacraments, the exhibition of God in Christ, the work of Christ, and the like, there are presented motives, arguments, and persuasions which, in their nature and degree, are fitted to influence and sway the heart of man; and are, in fact, so employed by the Spirit of God. If this is all they mean, we have no wish to quarrel with it—very much the reverse. But if they assert that this is the whole work of the Spirit of God in the regeneration of the soul, then it is plainly a perversion of language to call it the work of the Spirit of God at all. It may be that the Spirit's instrument is employed; but the Spirit is not the agent. The effect is ascribed to the instrument, and the dead inert matter; and there is no living agent to wield it. There were more reason in this in material operation, absurd as it is, than in the case of the dead sinner. In material operation, the instrument and the object have a natural adaptation, the one to the other. But it is not so in the dead sinner. There is a perfect adaptation in the means of grace;

but there is no corresponding adaptation in the dead soul, till the Spirit of God quicken it. There is a perfect adaptation in the heat and light, and dews and rains of heaven to the living plant, and in the living plant to them—and *growth*, though not life original, is the consequence. The life comes from the creating act of God. The adaptation in the former would be the same though the plant were withered and dead. But in such a case, no life and no growth could result, unless the power of God, by a supernatural operation, gave the life. So is it with the means of grace, and the soul dead in sin.

These means are adapted, in divine wisdom, to the dead in sin; but in them there is no power of response till God give them life and energy by his creating Spirit. These means are perfectly adapted to produce, by various motives and arguments, beneficial effects; but they cannot give life to the dead. These means are, in ordinary circumstances, employed in the conversion of a soul; but a system of means, even though of divine appointment, cannot create: they are still means—they are still instruments. They are of God's appointment; but they have not inherent divine power, because they are not God. But in regeneration, it is God himself that worketh both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. It is God that worketh all and in all. It were certainly deifying the instrument to attribute the new creation, the spiritual birth, to general means. God will not thus give his glory to any other. And of such idolatry are they guilty who ascribe divine power to means, and not directly to God; who can work with or without, or against means; who "can save by many or by few, or by them of NO POWER."

In regeneration there is an immediate internal work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, by which he infuses a new principle of spiritual life, a new habit of soul, new qualities,—by which a change so entire and complete is effected, that it is called a new and divine nature, and which is a real physical change; not physical in the sense that new original powers of mind are communicated so as actually to change the personal identity of the sinner;* but physical in the sense that spiritual qualities are infused by the direct agency of the Spirit of God, which were not present in the soul before, and by which it can respond to the external call of the word and gospel means, in the very same way as in the vision of the *dry bones*, which, though all means had been plied, and that at the command of God, and there was a certain effect produced,—they got a covering

* Calvin, in proving that the human will is not merely aided by divine grace in the work of the Spirit, but transformed and renewed, says: “If there be in the stone any softness, by the aid of which, being made more tender, it receives any heat, neither will I deny that the heart of man is ductile to obey what is right, provided the grace of God supply what is imperfect in it. But if He (God) wished to show by this similitude (the heart of stone) that nothing good can ever be extracted from our heart, unless it be made altogether other than what it is; let not us share between God and us, what he claims as due to him alone. If therefore the stone is turned into flesh when God converts us into the desire of what is right, whatever is of our own will is destroyed, what succeeds in its place is wholly of God. I say the will is destroyed, *not as it is will*; because in the conversion of man, what belongs to our first (holly nature), remains entire. I say also, it is created anew; not that it may begin to be will, but that it may be changed from bad to good.”—Calv. Inst. lib. ii. cap. iii. 6.

of sinews and flesh and skin; but the essential element was wanting; there was no life till "the Spirit entered into them, and they stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army."

If there be indeed no internal work of the Spirit of God operating an entire change on the spiritual nature of man, in the whole soul, intellect, will, and affections, but only certain outward objective means made to bear on the soul, by which, even with grace concurring, it may or may not be converted and be healed; in other words, if without communicating to it any new qualities which it possessed not before, the Spirit only helps it, as a stronger man would help a weaker, then whatever men may say as to the work of the Holy Spirit, it means nothing more than the ordinary providence of God: it is no extraordinary work of grace at all. It gives not God the glory of man's salvation: it shares it with man himself. It is therefore contrary to the whole scheme and essence of the gospel of the grace of God. Speaking of the scheme which makes regeneration consist in moral suasion, not in any real actual change in the spiritual nature of the man, Owen says:—

"But all this while the way whereby grace, or the Spirit of God, worketh this illumination, excites the affections, and aids the will, is by moral persuasion only, no real strength being communicated or infused but what the will is at perfect liberty to make use of, or to refuse at pleasure. Now this in effect is no less than to overthrow the whole grace of Jesus Christ, and to render it useless. For it ascribes unto man the honour of his conversion, his will being the principal cause of it. It makes a man to beget himself anew, or to be born again of himself; to make himself differ from others, by that which he hath not in an especial manner received. It takes away the analogy that there is between the forming of the natural

body of Christ in the womb, and the forming of his mystical body in regeneration. It makes the act of living unto God by faith and obedience to be a mere natural act, no fruit of the mediation or purchase of Christ, and allows the Spirit of God no more power nor efficacy in or towards our regeneration, than is in a minister who preaches the word, or in an orator who eloquently and pathetically persuades to virtue, and dehorts from vice."

We had occasion at one time to expound to a meeting of poor people, on a week-day evening, the fifty-first Psalm, and on the verse, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me," having remarked that David ascribed the giving of this clean heart to the creating act of God, we urged, as we thought, not only a powerful, but somewhat original argument, when we alleged that it were absurd to pray to God to do that which we ourselves could do, either in whole or in part; that no human beings would pray another to do for them that which they could do for themselves—that it were a mockery and insult so to do. But we were not chagrined, but much pleased in after reading to find that this argument was urged by the ancient writers against Pelagians, and by others in more recent times. It were truly preposterous to pray to God to create a clean heart, to work faith in us, to increase it, and all this by the exceeding greatness of his power, if after all there were really in ourselves all the power necessary to do these things for ourselves.

It is indeed truly unreasonable to admit that men are blind and dead in sin, and yet maintain that by mere external motives, inducements, persuasions, and arguments, they can both see, and live, and convert to God. It matters not that these are presented even in the gospel, and in all its light and fulness.

A universe full of light, could a blind man be in it, would not make him see. It will not do to say that, paradoxical as it may seem, we must receive it because it is a paradox of Scripture—we must have Scripture proof. But though Scripture reveals mysteries, and things supernatural and incomprehensible, it nowhere says that vice is virtue, falsehood is truth, death is life, or the dead live and do living acts, in order that God may give them life: no. But what it does say is, that the dead live through the life of God—the life that is in Christ, the living covenant Head of his elect people, imparted to them in his grace, by the living quickening power of the Eternal Spirit.

This doctrine, though not the fruit of human reason, is a reasonable doctrine, the only doctrine suited to the case; worthy of God, and suited to the wants of man.

The doctrine of Scripture as to the way of life to the spiritually dead is plain. Life—all spiritual blessings are in Christ, according to the good pleasure of God the Father. To obtain them we must have communion with him our Head. We must be engrafted into Christ as the branch into the vine. We must put on Christ. We must be found in him; be complete in him who is the Head. This saving union we obtain by faith; but this faith is of the operation of God by the Holy Spirit, who resides in Christ the Head of his elect, is theirs in the everlasting covenant, and in time enters into them, quickens them, and implants in them that faith which rests on and unites to Christ; and in actual possession and enjoyment appropriates Christ and all saving blessings. This is the account of the matter

which is suited to the necessities of the case. It is consonant with the word of God. It assigns to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the relation in and to the work of redemption proper to each of the persons in the blessed Godhead, and assigns to man the position proper to him as an entire debtor to divine grace, most comforting, though not most flattering to him, as a helpless sinner, as guilty as he is powerless. In it God is all and in all.

The Scriptures are full in testifying to the effect—that in the regeneration of the soul, the Spirit of God operates by a real internal efficiency, which is irresistibly efficacious and infallible in the result. It is beautifully expressed by Turretine as follows:—

“The motion of efficacious grace is neither to be properly or strictly called physical nor ethical; but supernatural and divine, which somewhat includes each habit—(habitus). It is not simply physical, because it is acted from a moral faculty which must be moved agreeably to its nature; nor simply ethical, as if God should only act objectively, and use gentle persuasion, which the Pelagians hold. But it is supernatural and divine, which transcends all these kinds. Meanwhile, it partakes something both of ethical and physical; because the Spirit operates to our conversion, both powerfully and sweetly, both gratefully and irresistibly. It belongs to the mode *physical*, because God creates us by his Spirit, regenerates, gives the heart of flesh, and efficiently infuses into us supernatural habits of faith and love. To the *moral*, because He preaches by the word, inclines, persuades, and draws to himself by various reasons, as by the bonds of love. Hence it is everywhere wont to be expressed by Augustine, by the phrase ‘victorious delight,’ which, with the highest pleasure and sweetness, has conjoined the highest efficacy and power, which overthrows all the contumacy of the heart. So that neither force or efficacy compels a man unwilling, nor sweetly moves a man running of his own accord; but both at once united; both strengthens the

infirmity of man, and overcomes the hatred of sin. It is powerful that it may not be vain, sweet that it may not be compulsive. It is a power supreme and unconquerable, that the corruption of nature, and the utmost impotence of doing good, and necessity of doing evil, may be overcome; but friendly withal and gracious, as becomes a nature intelligent and rational."*

Man, the same admirable writer beautifully reasons, is not only *averse* from God by impotence, but *adverse* by malignity, and any other remedy than that described would not be suited to the disease.

All this the scripture clearly indicates by the usual terms which it employs in describing this operation of the Spirit of God; which convey the notion of a physical change, and denote the exercise of supreme divine power, when it calls it creation, new birth, resurrection from the dead, drawing, &c.; and which convey the notion of an ethical or moral, as when it expresses it by illumination, teaching, persuasion, and the like. Nay, it not seldom joins both the habit of sweetness and of efficacy, and in the same places as when the spouse in Cant. i. 2—4, joins running with drawing; and Christ joins the yoke and the burden with sweetness and lightness, Matt. xi. 30; when we are said to be drawn, but at the same time taught, John vi. 44; to be persuaded by the power of the Spirit, but at the same time by demonstration; 1 Cor. ii. 4, to be converted by the mighty power of God, but with illumination full of joy, Eph. i. 18, 19; to be overcome, but allured, Jer. xx. 7; to be constrained, but by the cords of love and the bands of a man, Hos. xi. 4; 2 Cor. v. 14; by which believers, as by golden chains, are drawn to Christ,

* Instit. Fran. Turret. De Vocatione et Fide Quaes. iv. xviii.

far more truly than orators are said to draw men by their eloquence. Hence the sacred gospel, by which we are converted, is called both power and wisdom, 1 Cor. i.; the arm of God, than which nothing is more powerful, and honey or milk, than which nothing is sweeter, Psal. xix.; 1 Pet. ii. 2. The same Spirit by which we are renewed is a Spirit of strength and a Spirit of grace; sceptre of power, and the oil of joy; the Spirit of might and of love, 2 Tim. i. 7, that his omnipotent yet most gracious energy may be denoted.*

There are many express declarations of the word of God to the same effect. What can be more expressive of the doctrine than what is declared, Eph. i. 19, 20, "That we may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*." It is here asserted that the nature of the operation or efficiency by which God makes men believers, or keeps them such, by which he gives them power to believe, is the same by which he raised up Christ their Head from the dead, which was the highest exercise of power; not an impression by a voice from without, but a real efficient entering in of the Holy Spirit, the present actuating agent communicating life. So we read again, 2 Thess. i. 11, "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;" 2 Pet. i. 3, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness." "Wherever this work is

* Ibid. xxi.

spoken of," says Owen, "with respect unto an active efficiency, it is ascribed unto God, He creates us anew, he quickens us, he begets us of his own will; but where it is spoken of with respect unto us, there it is passively expressed; we are created in Christ Jesus, we are new creatures, we are born again," &c. And we agree with him when he adds, "which one observation is sufficient to evert the whole hypothesis of Arminian grace. Unless a work wrought by power, and that real and immediate, be intended herein, such a work may not be supposed possible, nor can be expressed."

We affirm then that in regeneration there is an immediate creating act of divine power, definite in its object, certain, efficacious and invincible in its result. It is not a mere general dispensation of grace in the plying of means, or exhibition of objective influences, as in the ordinary providence of God. No man that is other than an atheist will deny that all things are of God, and no man having any pretensions to the acknowledgment of the doctrine of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost, will deny, in terms, that regeneration;—that faith, are the work of the Holy Spirit. But when they assert that the work in question is nothing more than that in the Christian dispensation, wherever the gospel is proclaimed, and Christ's ordinances truly administered, the Spirit of God is present in his saving influences, but may or may not be resisted; and the issue may or may not be salvation, subject to a thousand contingencies; just as in the ordinary providence of God, when the husbandman does his part, a crop may or may not be the issue, according to the nature of the times and seasons; they deny the doctrine of the grace of God, and

the spiritual death of man, and set aside the peculiar work of redemption, and make the solemn declaration of our Lord, "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," a mere obscurely expressed truism, which Nicodemus did not need to be told, because he had already acknowledged, "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God."

We do not mean to affirm that even believers may not resist the Holy Ghost, so that his motions may not issue in the results which they are in their nature fitted to produce. But we do most confidently declare, that whenever there is a saving work, a real conversion, it was designed, and effectually originated, and completed by the special and invincible agency of the Holy Ghost, by a work of his which none can let. A reclamation is made against this doctrine, O this is compulsion, it destroys man's rational nature. We cannot help thinking that though it were, it is not more absurd, nor so absurd, by millions of times, as the opposite doctrine, which in reality affirms that mortal man may successfully compel God, and successfully resist him when he really designs, desires, and operates to his salvation. We would suppose this an obvious impiety. But where is the compulsion of saying that when the omniscient, omnipotent, infinitely gracious Jehovah, designs to give life in time, to a dead soul, that shall issue in immortal life in eternity, he communicates it of his invincible, or what is the same thing, of his almighty power? He gives a new nature which acts freely, and by an essentiality of nature as divine; and sustained as well as formed by the Almighty Spirit, bears down and most certainly overcomes the corrupt nature of mortal man, sustained by all the power of Satan. There is a real

distinction, as drawn by the ancients, between the compulsion of a corrupt nature; and the necessary, though free, acting of a holy divine nature. It is perfectly intelligible that those who maintain that the whole work of the Spirit consists in a mere objective exhibition of the truth, and of all that the truth of God contains,—in a mere plying of outward means, may maintain that grace, that the Holy Spirit in his work, may be successfully resisted, and that otherwise a man is compelled to convert and be healed. We would go farther and say that if this objective representation were all, he will and must resist successfully, and cannot be compelled. His soul can no more harmonize with the things thus objectively exhibited, than enmity with love; light with darkness, softness with hardness, between which there is essential antagonism to be removed only by Almighty power and grace.

In this way there never can be conversion at all, and unless, what we suspect is at the bottom of the whole, man is not believed to be enmity to God, no other result can follow this objective exhibition, but continued and successful resistance, and the eternal ruin of every human soul. But blessed be God, his ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. But we are reduced to no such absurdities, and no such consequences, when we maintain that in regeneration the Spirit of God imparts a new and divine nature, which is not objectively held out for acceptance to the natural corrupt will of man, but is wrought in man by the Spirit of God, and acts to its own spiritual, eternal, holy, gracious ends, willingly and freely, and God working in it and by it, invincibly, though sweetly.

This, we affirm, is the doctrine of scripture. What else is implied in the doctrine of the apostle to the Philippians, when he says, Phil. i. 6, "Being CONFIDENT of this VERY THING, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." The good work *begun* is plainly announced in these words, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the hard and stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: and I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." To exclude any notion of self-working or co-operation, the apostle says, Phil. ii. 13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure;" and again, 1 Cor. xii. 6, "It is the same God who worketh all and in all." And in the epistle to the Ephesians, second chapter, where the quickening of the dead soul is ascribed entirely to the grace of God, and the faith that unites to Christ is called the gift of God; and for a very obvious reason all work of man is excluded, *that God may have the glory*; and it is further asserted of believers that all their good works are of God, "for we are his workmanship created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Can language be stronger as to the divine origin and certain issue of the quickening grace of God? It is of God's eternal purpose, and by God's creating work, and to the completion of God's salvation; and on the other hand Paul says, 2 Cor. iii. 5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." That very knowing of the Spirit of God, in his saving

operations, is the fruit of his entering in and indwelling in his own people ; and is beyond the power and capacity of the world. So says our Lord, John xiv. 17, "The Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him." Why ? Does it say because the light shone fully upon you and ye looked and knew and believed and lived ? No. But, "For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

The scriptures are not only thus express to the effect, that our ability to believe is of God, but that faith itself is of God ; clearly excluding man altogether from any share in the divine work of his salvation ; and intimating that God not only takes away the heart of stone, but what takes the place of it is said to come directly from God, Phil. i. 29, "To you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake." Faith is here a gift, a grace, and given as a peculiar privilege. Faith and coming to Christ are one and the same, and our Lord says, "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." If this merely mean that no man can come to Christ except there be an exhibition of means, it is really a truism as bald as to say, there will be no crop unless there be sun and wind and rain. What is meant to be said, is that though there be sun and wind and rain, there is no living seed till God form it and sow it ; he must both form and give the living seed and the genial influences ; all is of God. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." If it be of us it is neither of grace nor of God. If it be said to be of us either in whole or in part it cannot be of God. Both in Acts xi. 17, 18, and in 2 Tim. ii. 25,

repentance, repentance unto life, is directly ascribed to the gift of God ; not merely a power to believe and repent if we choose, but faith and repentance themselves, the actual certain results of the saving operations of the Holy Ghost. He who begins the good work doth perfect it, and will perfect it to the day of the Lord Jesus. It is expressly declared in many passages that the heart of stone is taken away, that the heart is circumcised and its corruption removed ; an heart of flesh, a new heart, one heart, a new spirit, God's Spirit, a heart to know God, to love the Lord their God, is bestowed. Such an heart and spirit God himself gives,—by his own act puts within them ; and where it is not done it is negatively ascribed to God, “The Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see and ears to hear, unto this day.” These things imply a removal of all obstacles by immediate divine power, and the result is the action of the new heart in the life of faith, and obedience, and in the Spirit of adoption, as sons and daughters of the Almighty. God promises to put his fear in the hearts of his covenant people, to “write his law in their hearts and put it in their minds, and they shall be his sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” See Ezek. xi. 19 ; xxxvi. 26 ; Jer. xxiv. 7 ; xxxi. 33 ; xxxii. 39, 40 ; Deut. xxx. 6 ; xxix. 4. God is faithful who hath promised ; He worketh, and who shall let Him ? These results are both absolutely promised and certainly effected ; and in the faith of these the pious soul prays that God would in all these things fulfil in it all the good pleasure of his goodness. In reference to these promises it may not be useless to notice in the words of Owen, that,—

“The subject spoken of in these promises is the heart. And the heart in the scripture is taken for the whole rational soul, not absolutely, but as all the faculties of the soul are one common principle of all our moral operations. Hence it hath such properties assigned unto it as are peculiar to the mind or understanding, as to see, perceive, to be wise, and to understand; and on the contrary to be blind and foolish, sometimes such as belong properly to the will and affections, as to obey, to love, to fear, to trust in God. Wherefore the principle of all our spiritual and moral operations is intended thereby.”*

We have endeavoured to prove, and we think successfully, in the first chapter of this book, that the depravity of our nature reaches to the whole soul in all its faculties, mind, will, and affections, inducing an entire inability, both intellectual and moral, to any thing spiritually good; described therefore most appropriately in scripture as a “death in trespasses and sins.” It is altogether irrational to hold that any thing short of an immediate infusion of life by the creating power of God, and which in the plan of redemption is the work of the Holy Ghost, can deliver or regenerate the soul.

Corresponding therefore to this death in trespasses and sins is the work by which it is taken away. Hence it is called a quickening, vivification, making alive. “You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” It is said “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” But how shall the dead hear the voice till life be imparted, and who can give life but God? It is the same power and the same voice which said, “Let there be light, and light was;” “Talitha Cumi, I say unto thee, Arise, and the maid arose;” “Lazarus, come

* Owen on the Spirit, chap. v. sect. 44.

forth," and he came forth. A miserable sophism is practised by some in the application of this text, John v. 25, as if whenever a mere mortal man utters a portion of the word of God, or a mortal man reads it on the page of the written record, that this is really the Almighty power of God speaking, and through the word really acting to produce life; and yet mortal man may resist and frustrate it. But surely it is most egregious trifling, as well as something in our eyes like impiety and blasphemy, to say that the words uttered by *man's* voice could raise the dead or create the light. It was not the mere sound of words, but the exertion of Almighty power, that created the light and raised the dead. It was the will of God. The words were mere signs to declare almighty power was being exerted. Will any one be so foolish as affirm that the words were necessary to the effect as far as the divine agent and the subject of operation are concerned? No. But they tell the subject of the creating act, for his joy and consolation, that verily a soul is born into the spiritual world of God.

This regeneration consists not merely in ability to perform certain acts of faith or obedience, but in the conferring of a new state, habit, or condition of soul, in the renovation of the spiritual image of God on the soul—a creating of the substantial “image of the heavenly,” and the removing the “image of the earthy.” “For as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly, who is the Lord from heaven.” Eph. iv. 22—24, “That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt after the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Col. iii. 10, “And have put

on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

This image of God is both intellectual and moral, as is the image of the earthy. We have seen that the image of the earthy is blindness of mind and enmity of heart. The renovation of the image of God upon the soul has respect therefore to both, and so in both is ascribed to God. Though it be the peculiar office of the Holy Ghost, yet in the economy of redemption it is ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is an immediate work of God. Thus, 1 John v. 20, "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true." What is the meaning of giving an understanding to know, if there were such an understanding there before this act of giving it? There is an understanding to know certain things—to be wise to do evil—but the understanding to "know him that is true" is his own gift, the fruit of his creating Spirit, that proceedeth from him. Naturally "there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God." "To do good they have no knowledge." In this respect they are altogether brutish, though not brutes; but having a reason and an understanding, but totally incapable of knowing God, understanding "Him that is true." This is above its reach till it be given from above. So the saints of God felt, and accordingly they acted and had recourse to the Eternal Source of understanding—to God. "Give me," David prays, "understanding, and I shall keep thy law." Paul does not say to the Ephesians, You have eyes; open them. You have an understanding; open it;—use them, and believe and live. But no: He shows them a more excellent and gracious

way. "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,—the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ whom he raised from the dead." Here the prayer of Paul is to God the Father, to give God, the Holy Spirit, who was to give them knowledge, by directly enlightening the eyes of their understanding; not by new light falling on them from without, but "being opened" to discern the knowledge revealed, that thus they might know experimentally the nature and enjoyment of the hope of the gospel, and what was the fulness of the glorious inheritance of glory to the saints, or of glory to God in his saints; that they might experimentally know that they have been the subjects of the operation of the exceeding greatness of that power exerted on those who believe, a power after the manner of that wrought in raising Christ from the dead,—a power immediate, subjective, efficient. Scott expounds this clause thus: "And that they might perceive what 'exceeding greatness of his power' had been exerted *in their conversion* to the faith; and was still engaged to uphold, strengthen, and defend them; to perfect their new creation, and to complete their redemption from Satan, sin, and death, according to the exertion of the same mighty power which was put forth in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ."

We have already seen that this is called the "re-

newing of our minds," renewal in knowledge; and so complete is it that the apostle describes it as a transformation—a metamorphosis—for so is the import of the phrase, Rom. xii. 2, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, *that ye may prove*," &c. The same thing, viz., that there is a subjective illumination of the understanding to fit it for savingly discerning the spiritual things made known and offered in the gospel, is manifest from these words, 2 Cor. iv. 6, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." After quoting this text, and denying that there is any analogy between the objective exhibition of doctrinal truth outwardly to the soul of man and the *creation* of natural light, Owen adds, the apostle "having therefore (1.) compared the mind of man by nature with respect unto a power of discerning spiritual things, to the state of all things under darkness before the creation of light, and (2.) the powerful working of God in illumination, unto the act of his omnipotency in the production or creation of light natural,—he ascribes our ability to know, and our actual knowledge of God in Christ."

We may not pursue this subject further. We apprehend the doctrine of Scripture plainly to be, that the Spirit of God, in regenerating a soul, operates an immediate, direct, supernatural change upon the whole man, intellectual, moral, and active—so that he who was before dead in sin, and incapable of any living, spiritual saving acts, is made alive unto God, by the communication by the Holy Ghost of that life which is in Christ, and in no way directly or indirectly by any ability of any kind to spiritual

effects, in the sinner himself—and that the Holy Spirit in this work in the soul of the elect is invincible, and the issue both previously foreseen and determined and infallibly certain. “Otherwise grace is no more grace”—otherwise the adage, Man proposes but God disposes, is reversed; and God proposes and man disposes, must take its place. Otherwise it can no longer be said, “of God and through God and to God are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever.” He has now a competitor for the glory of salvation in the heart and will of a sinner yet dead in sin—and yet dead as it is while God moves towards it in the light of the Word, it is alleged it must move, of its own power and by its own energy, to meet and receive the light which gives it life—a statement which carries its own refutation, being contrary to common sense.

It is not to the purpose, in order to the denial of the doctrine we maintain, to quote passages such as these:—“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”—“Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth”—and the like. In the first place, we have no wish to deny the statements of doctrine in the passages where these texts occur—nor could it in any way serve our purpose to do so. Any one who will take the trouble to look at them in their context and connection, will see that though they have no direct reference to the subject in question, they have a very strong indirect bearing upon it. In regard to the former of these, we hold with all our heart the doctrine declared in it in connection with the preceding verse, 1 Pet. i. 22, that the soul is purified in obeying the truth, which obedience it

yields through the power of the Holy Spirit; we firmly believe that they who are born again (by the Holy Ghost, as is expressly declared,) are not born again by falsehood or error, but by the incorruptible seed. But while there is incorruptible seed, there must be the honest simple heart prepared of God for receiving it, or briars and thorns must choke the word. In like manner, in regard to the latter text, we as firmly believe the great truth asserted in it in connection with its context, viz., v. 14—18, that all wickedness proceeds from man himself, and every good and perfect gift cometh from God, and that “of *his own will*,” not of man’s will, but “of *his own will* begat he us, by the word of truth.” Both these passages most pointedly call this work a new creation—by the Holy Spirit—“not of blood, nor of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.” It were absurd to call an external influence on a thing already in being, the creation of a thing not previously in being. Had it been an impression, and not a creation in the strict sense of the term that was meant, we cannot imagine that the Spirit of inspiration was so helpless as not to be able to express it. Neither can we discover that there is any thing more philosophical, rational, or consonant with man’s moral nature and accountability, in so arranging, and disposing, and enforcing various external appliances, so as the result shall be life to a dead soul, were it possible, than is the doctrine that He who has life can and does convey it by a direct and immediate operation on the soul, by which it receives that truth divinely adapted to all the powers and faculties of a living soul; but which proves inefficacious to a soul dead in Satan and in sin. We con-

fess ourselves much inclined to understand the term "Word" in many places of the New Testament where personal attributes and acts are ascribed to it, as meaning Christ, the Eternal Word, as in Heb. iv. 12.

But our argument does not require this. We are quite content to allow those who are so disposed, to take the subject as stated in the following passage:—

"Although the Spirit in effectual calling do not act without the Word, yet he does not act only mediately by the Word, but he operates with the Word immediately upon the soul; that the calling necessarily secures its effect. I say the Spirit does not act without the Word; for as we have already hinted, God both wills to act in a way suited to a rational nature, and according to the apostle, Rom. x. 17, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' It is certain that the word ought necessarily to concur with the Spirit to our conversion according to the order of God, and the constitution of the covenant of grace, Is. lix. 21, and that without it the Spirit does not operate it in adults. Nor is it to be doubted, but that its fit and wise dispensation, by the clear and solid proposal of the truth seasonably made, conduces much to the success of the good work. But whatever be its efficacy, yet it suffices not without the immediate operation of the Spirit. Nor can the word, by whatever evidence or seasonableness it is proposed, and by whatever circumstances and aids it may be clothed, ever produce that effect, unless there be the secret, inexpressible, and supernatural work of the Spirit; which can immediately affect the soul, and sway with omnipotent power. Namely—when two things are necessarily required to conversion: on the one hand the object, which is outwardly offered to the mind: but on the other, the power (*facultas*) which internally receives it. And such and so great is the corruption which has been conveyed to the soul by sin, that although there should have remained the natural power of exercising understanding and will, yet the habitude or moral disposition of judging and will-

ing hath been so cut off, that it can no longer be moved to the right exercise of itself by the appliance of the object, as was wont to be done in the order of nature, and the appointed state of man, unless the power (*facultas*) itself be renewed. Therefore in the conversion of man there is always a necessity for double grace, one *objective* and extrinsic, which consists in proposing the object, but the other *subjective*, which acts immediately on the faculty, so as to render it capable of receiving the object, (*capacem objecti*;) not only that it may rightly put forth its acts about it, but that it may put them forth in act. But each depends on the Spirit of God operating both ways, both in the word and in the heart. In the word, under the relation of the objective cause. In the heart, under the habit of faith, the efficient cause. In the word, by morally acting by the revelation of the object, and by persuasion. But in the heart by operating efficaciously and supernaturally (*hyperphysice*) by the infusion of good habits, the creation of a new heart, and the powerful impress of the object proposed.”*

Calvin states the subject clearly, and then very happily ridicules those who heap up inapplicable texts on this subject, and think they gain the victory by numbers:—

“If, for the reception of this very grace, by which it happens that obedience is given to exhortation, he wishes us to be prepared by exhortation, what is there in this arrangement at which you should bite and carp? If warnings and reproofs should avail nothing more with the godly than to convict them of sin, they should not, on that account, be deemed wholly useless. Now, when the Spirit operating internally, they avail much to kindle the desire of good, to dispel their torpor, to take away the pleasure and poisoned sweetness of sin, and, on the contrary, to make it odious and wearisome, who may dare to cavil at them as superfluous? If any one desire a clearer answer, he may have it thus: God operates in his elect two ways—within, by the Spirit; without, by the word. By the

* Fr. Turret. Loc. Dec. Quint. Quaest. iv. xxiii.

Spirit by illuminating their minds, by forming their hearts to the love of righteousness, he makes them new creatures. By the word he stirs them up to desire, seek, and attain the same renovation. In both he exerts the efficacy of his power (*manus*) after the manner of its peculiar dispensation. * * *

“Some are very laborious in heaping up Scripture testimonies, and that they sedulously do, that since they cannot prevail by weight, they may at least overwhelm us with the number. But as in battles, when you come to close quarters, a feeble multitude, however pompous and imposing, is forthwith overthrown by a few shots, and routed, so it will be very easy for us to disperse them with their crowd.”

There are, in our day, knights far more redoubtable than even this. They do not come to close quarters with the enemy at all, but pertinaciously maintain an attitude of defiance by standing at a distance, and parading two or three very good warriors who will war well enough in a just warfare, and in right position, but positively refuse to be treated as stragglers, and to go into combat with their own very good friends, with whom they have no cause of quarrel at all.

Having proceeded thus far, it may be well both for the sake of distinctness, as to what we do maintain, as well as to show the testimony of the Reformed churches, to state their doctrine on the subject under discussion in the language of their Confessions, and of some of their leading and most celebrated writers. And this we the more readily do, that they furnish not only authorities, but illustrations and unanswerable arguments.

Perhaps we may here follow the order pursued in stating the doctrine by these authorities on the subject of man's inability, and begin with the doctrine of

that most interesting of the true Protestant churches, that of the valleys of Piemont.

In an ancient Confession published by Morland, and without a date, Article III. is as follows:—

“We believe that the Holy Spirit is our Comforter, proceeding from the Father and the Son, by whose inspiration we make our prayers, being by Him *renewed*, who *works in us all good works*, and by *whom we have the knowledge of all truths*.”

In a Confession of Faith addressed to Ladislaus, king of Bohemia, 1508, and afterwards enlarged and presented to Ferdinand king of Bohemia, 1535, by the same people, they say:—

Article VI.—“No man can have this faith by any power, will, or pleasure of his own; it is indeed the gift of God, who, when and where it pleaseth him, worketh it in man by his Spirit, to *the end he may receive whatsoever shall be rightly administered to him by the outward word*, and the sacraments instituted by Christ, in order to salvation.”

Again in the Confession of Faith published in 1655, previously quoted:—

“Faith is the gracious and efficacious work of the Holy Spirit, which enlightens our souls and persuades them (le porta—bears them) to lean and rest upon the mercy of God, and so thereby to apply unto themselves the merits of Jesus Christ.”

The Helvetic Confession, after declaring the inability both of the intellect and will to any thing spiritually good, adds:—

“In regeneration the intellect is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that it may understand both the mysteries and the will of God. And the will itself is not only changed by the Holy Spirit, but is even furnished with powers both freely to will and to do what is good (*instruitur facultatibus, ut sponte velit et possit bonum*.) Unless we shall grant this, we shall deny Christian liberty, and introduce legal bondage. But both the prophet makes God speak

this; 'I will put my law into their minds, and write it in their hearts,' and the Lord also says in the gospel; 'If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed.' Paul in like manner to the Philippians: 'To you *it is given*,' says he, '*on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on his name, but also to suffer for his sake.*' And again, 'I am persuaded that He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of the Lord Jesus.' Also, 'It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do.' Where, however, we teach that two things are to be observed. First, that the regenerated in the choice and performance of good not only act passively, but actively. *They are acted by God, that they may themselves do what they do,*" &c.*

The Saxon Confession, in the long article on the remission of sins and justification, says:—

"But we have shown above that by faith is signified fiducial trust, acquiescing in the Son of God the propitiator, on account of whom we are accepted and please, not on account of our virtues or fulfilling of the law. But when, in this consolation, the trust, by which we acquiesce in the Son of God, is truly an emotion kindled (*motus accensus*) by the Holy Spirit, by which the heart is made alive, and freed from eternal death, this change (*conversio*) is called regeneration, John iii, 'unless a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' And man becomes truly an habitation of God, who is efficacious in him, as said, John xiv. 'If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.' The eternal Father and Son vivify and renew the heart by the Holy Spirit."

Again in the Section on Free Will—

"But man can by no means free himself from sin and eternal death, by natural powers; but this liberation and turning of man to God, and spiritual renovation, is effected by the Son of God vivifying us by his Holy Spirit, as is said, Rom. viii. 'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ,

* Conf. Helvetica, Art. IX.

he is none of his.' And the will, having received the Holy Spirit, is no longer inactive. And we give thanks to God for this immense blessing, that for the sake of his Son, and by Him, he gives us the Holy Spirit, and rules us by his Spirit; and we condemn Pelagians and Manicheans," &c.

The Belgic Confession, Article XIV., not only asserts man's utter inability both in mind and will to any thing spiritually good; but directly affirms:—

"Article XXII.—We believe that the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts imparts to us true faith, so that we obtain the true knowledge of this so great mystery (viz. salvation through Christ), which faith embraces Jesus Christ with all his merits," &c.

The Synod of Dort, in the third and fourth head of Doctrine concerning the corruption of man, and his conversion to God, and the manner of it, after denying the Pelagian doctrine of free will, say:—

"Article XI.—But when God executes his gracious purpose in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only provides that the gospel he preached to them externally and powerfully illuminates their mind by the Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things that be of the Spirit of God, but by the efficacious working of the same regenerating Spirit he penetrates the innermost soul of man, opens the closed heart, softens the hard heart, circumcises the heart of flesh, infuses new qualities into the will, and makes it from being dead, living, from being bad, good, from being unwilling, willing, from being refractory, submissive, actuates and strengthens it, that, as a good tree, it can bring forth the fruits of good actions."

"Article XII.—And this is that regeneration so often declared in the scripture, new creation, raising from the dead, and quickening, which God, without us, works in us. But it is by no means effected by the doctrine sounding outwardly, by moral suasion, or such a method of operation, that after the operation of God (as to him) it may remain in the power of the man to be converted or not converted; but is an operation plainly supernatural, most

powerful, yet most sweet (*suavissima*), wonderful, secret, ineffable, in its efficacy according to the scripture (which is inspired by the author of this operation), neither less than nor inferior to a creation, or a resuscitation of the dead, so that all those, in whose hearts God operates in this to be admired way, are certainly, infallibly, and efficaciously regenerated, and do in act believe. And then the will now renewed, not only is acted and moved by God, but acted by God, itself acts. Wherefore even man, himself by that grace received, is rightly said to believe and repent.”*

In the Rejection of Errors they disown the opposite doctrines, viz., the doctrines of those—

“VI. Who teach, that in the true conversion of man, there cannot be any new qualities, habits, or gifts infused into his will by God, and so faith, in which we are at first converted, and from which we are named faithful, is not a quality or gift infused by God; but only the act of man, nor can otherwise be called a gift, than in respect of the power of arriving at it. For these things contradict the holy scriptures, which testify that God infuses the new qualities of faith, obedience, and the sense of his love into our hearts, Jer. xxxi. 33, ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it in their hearts;’ Isa. xlv. 3, ‘I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed;’ Rom. v. 5, ‘The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.’ They are repugnant to the continual conduct of the church, thus praying by the prophet, ‘Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned,’ Jer. xxxi. 18.

“VII. Who teach, that the grace by which we are converted to God is any thing else than gentle persuasion; or (as others explain) that the noblest mode of acting in the conversion of man, and most suitable to human nature, is that which is effected by suasion; and that nothing hinders but that moral grace alone may render the natural (animal) man spiritual; nay, that God produces the consent of the will no otherwise than by moral reason, and that the

* Sylloge Confess. Articuli XI. XII.

efficacy of divine operation, by which it overcomes the operation of Satan, consists in that, that God promises eternal good, Satan only temporal. For this is altogether Pelagian and contrary to all scripture, which besides this, acknowledges another, and far more efficacious and divine method of the Holy Spirit's acting, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and a new heart will I give unto you, and I will take away the heart of stone and give you an heart of flesh.'

"VIII. Who teach, that God in the regeneration of man does not apply that force (*cas vires*) of his omnipotence by which he may infallibly bend his will to faith and persuasion, but having put aside all the operations of grace, which God uses to convert man, yet man can so resist God, and the Spirit intending his regeneration, and in reality does often resist, that he may wholly hinder his regeneration, and it can so remain in his power, to be regenerated or not regenerated. This is none other than to take away all the efficacy of the grace of God in our conversion. And to subject the agency of the Omnipotent God to the will of man, and that contrary to the apostles, who teach that we believe according to the working of his mighty power, Eph. i. 19, 'And that God would fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;' 2 Thess. i. 11, 'Also according as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3.'"

The Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches of France, Article xxi. says:—

"We do believe, that by the secret grace of the Holy Ghost, the light of Faith is kindled up in us, so that it is a gracious and special gift; which God bestoweth upon whom he pleaseth; and the Faithful have nothing whereof they may boast, because they are doubly obliged unto God, for having preferred them before others, and for that he never gave faith unto the elect once only to bring them into the good way, but also to cause them to continue in it unto the end. For as God doth begin faith, so doth he also finish and perfect it."

In the Westminster standards this doctrine is

largely and distinctly unfolded. Confession of Faith, Chap. X. Sect. I. II :—

“I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

“II. This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.”

In the Larger Catechism, answers to Questions 32, 58, 59, 66, 67, we read :—

“The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation.

“We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them unto us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.

“Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.

“The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God’s grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as

their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling.

“Effectual calling is the work of God’s almighty power and grace, whereby (out of his free and special love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) he doth, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his word and Spirit; savingly enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.”

In the Shorter Catechism, answers to Questions 29, 30, 31 :—

“We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

“The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

“Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.”

Such then is very plainly the doctrine of the leading Reformed churches on this subject. No one can justly charge us with being guided in our opinions solely by authority. But one thing is certain, the church hath never produced men to surpass, if even to approach in maturity of Christian experience, extent of Scripture learning, acuteness of intellect, theological depth and solidity, and skill in controverted points of religious doctrine, the men of these times; and for our own parts we see very little in the diluted theology, attenuated learning, or bustling secularity of the present day to shake our confidence in

their soundness, or to secure for itself our respect and acquiescence. And if there is one thing more than another that characterizes the theology of the Reformers and their immediate successors, it was the great principle that GOD IS ALL AND IN ALL. And we know not whether the doctrine on the work of the Spirit as maintained by them is more satisfactory and delightful in the revenue of glory it brings to God, or in the comfort it secures to man. Halyburton, the successful opponent of Locke, did not think it unworthy of himself or his cause to make the consent of the reformed churches one of the difficulties opposed to the other side. And in allusion to a conceited adversary who spoke very lightly of them, he quaintly says:—"But, however, this will have its weight with sober spirits."*

We have already quoted various passages from Calvin, Fr. Turretine, and Owen, and as the sentiments of the individual writers of these times are embodied in their corporate creeds, it is perhaps unnecessary to be more particular in referring to them. But as it is one of the arts of the present day to quote stray passages of authors when not directly writing on the points in hand, but when incidentally noticing some collateral point, and therefore to give an erroneous view of their sentiments, it may not be improper to advert to them, though briefly.

We regret much we cannot place before the unlearned reader the whole of Fr. Turretine's Question IV. Concerning effectual calling. After some quotations from the Synod of Dort, Calvin, and Augustine, he says:—

"XXVIII.—Which things being thus laid down, if it be

* Halyburton on Justification.

now enquired: Besides grace objective and mediate, by which the Spirit by the word, with whatever seasonableness proclaimed, or with whatever circumstances and aids (ad-miniculis) supported, acts on the mind, is there required any other grace subjective and immediate, by which there is an immediate operation on the faculties themselves to dispose them to the saving reception of the word, and by whose efficacy conversion is necessarily and infallibly effected? We answer affirmatively, as the church of old hath decreed against the Pelagians, and most recently against the Remonstrants."

And he proceeds to maintain this affirmative by a great variety of reasons which he states and illustrates. We can only glance at them. They have been in part already illustrated. They are such as these—

"1st. Because the greatness of the corruption and impotency induced by sin evinces it; and mere suasion and the proposal of an evangelic object cannot raise the dead or cure the blind and deaf. It is evident, moreover, that no object ever concurs to form and dispose its own faculty to its own exercise. But it supposes a faculty for its reception. Who would ever maintain that a faculty ought to act in order to be renovated or regenerated? Must it not rather be renovated and regenerated that it may act. But so far is the word from having power to move the corrupt mind or deliver it from its prejudices, that the word itself, if not by itself, at least as an occasion, confirms and increases those same prejudices. It is further evident from the condition of infants, who are born in sin, and yet renewed without the word.

"2d. The manner of the operation of grace in our conversion farther incontestably proves this when it is described by creation, resurrection, regeneration, taking away the heart of stone, giving the heart of flesh, drawing, giving of the Spirit, and other phrases of that sort, which imply the supreme and invincible power of God. For if the whole action of God consists in the clear exhibition of the gospel seasonably made, why is omnipotence required for that purpose? Nor does the similitude of natural generation avail

little to the support of the same argument. The seed sown does not give life but supposes it.

“3d. To the same purpose tend the various places of scripture in which grace is proposed as necessary to the reception of the word. See Psal. cxix. 18; Eph. i. 17, 18; Luke xxiv. 45; Is. xlviii. 8; 1. 5; Deut. xxix. 4, 5; Acts xvi. 14; where there is not the contemplation of the truth to open the eyes, ears, and heart; but the opening of these organs to behold and receive the truth.

“4th. Those places in scripture support this doctrine of immediate grace, in which the power of the Holy Spirit, operating in us, is distinguished from or contrasted with the word, 1 Thess. i. 5, 6, ‘Our gospel came to you not in word only but in power and, or even, in the Holy Ghost;’ 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 9, ‘Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase.’

“5th. But not less solidly do these places evince this which attribute some internal action to God in the conversion of man; such as Phil. ii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 11; Heb. xiii. 21; Jer. xxxi. 33; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, already quoted.”

But this doctrine is still more clearly confirmed from the gift of the Spirit which is conferred on us by Christ, which, as it is distinguished from the word, has an operation distinct from it. Not merely, because it is not only a certain influence which exerts itself in man, but a divine Person who comes into our hearts, that he may dwell in them as in his temple, 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19. We may add, Eph. ii. 22, the Spirit witnesses with our Spirit that we are the children of God; 1 Cor. xii. 11, helps our infirmities, &c. Rom. viii. seals us to the day of eternal redemption; 2 Cor. i. 22, searches the hearts; Eph. iv. 30, penetrates it, &c.; see John xiv. 16. 1 John ii. 20, 27, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things, and need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

The truth is further proved from its necessity and possibility, and the absurd consequences ensuing from its denial.

There are certain difficulties in connection with this subject, propounded on the other side, which perhaps receive their solution in one single observation, viz., That the Spirit operates in us immediately, not so much before or after the word, as simultaneously with the word; so that conversion which is produced by the Holy Spirit, is also effected in its own order by the word; by the latter, indeed, objectively and morally, but by the former efficiently and subjectively. Hence faith which is objectively said to come by hearing, comes nevertheless efficiently by the Spirit, who is called therefore the Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13, inasmuch as the same object which is externally proposed by the word, and is received by man at least theoretically and historically, is impressed inwardly on the mind by the Spirit, that from Him it may be believed practically and savingly.

Indeed the very nature of the objective light of the word, viewed in connection with the state and character of man, demonstrates the absolute necessity of the immediate subjective work of the Spirit of God as antecedent in the order of nature, or of causation to the willing reception of the objective light of the word. For what is the state of man by nature? Undeniably it is opposition to God. This is its substance and essence, call it what you may, intellectual or moral. It is impossible, then, that the mere exhibition of the hated object, in greater fulness and brighter manifestation, can change enmity into love. The opposition, in this case, would only be the more intense. We hold that it is not one attribute of God,

but the whole character of God, that excites the enmity of the carnal mind; and the more resplendent the display of God, the deeper its opposition. Manifestly, then, the word, or the things in the word, which are valuable only as they display God in the wonders of his being, perfections, and dispensations, cannot regenerate; whatever be their nature and glorious tendency in this way, a change from God, in short, a supernatural divine operation, must pass on the soul of man by which it has a due adaptation and relation to the things revealed; in other words, a due fitness for God communicated to it. But this operation having taken place, this change having taken effect, it is impossible to tell the delightful and blessed effects which result from the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God shining into the soul. This argument, which we think unanswerable, has been suggested by reading the following magnificent passage from Halyburton on the Reason of Faith:—

“VII. This *light*, whereby the *written word* evidences itself unto the minds of those who have spiritual ears to hear, and apply them, is nothing else save the *impress* of the *majesty, truth, omniscience, wisdom, holiness, justice, grace, mercy, and authority* of God, stamped upon the *Scriptures* by the Holy Ghost, and beaming or shining into the minds of such persons upon their hearing or perusal, and affecting them with a sense of these perfections, both in what is spoken, and in the *majestic and God-becoming* way of speaking. They speak as *never man spake*; the matter spoken, and the manner of speaking, has a greatness discernible by a spiritual understanding, that satisfies it fully, that God is the speaker. And all the *impressions* of God’s *wisdom, faithfulness, omniscience, and majesty*, that are stamped upon the matter contained in the *Scriptures* being conveyed *only* by the *word*, do join the impressions that are upon the *word*, and strengthen

the *evidence* they give of their *divine original*, since these *impressions* do not otherwise appear to our minds, or affect them, than by the word. The *word*, by a *God-becoming manifestation* of the truth, that scorns all these little and mean arts of insinuation, by fair and enticing words, and artificially dressed up argumentations, with other the like confessions of human weakness, that are in all human writings, commends itself to the conscience, dives into the souls of men, into all the secret recesses of their hearts, guides, teaches, directs, determines, and judges in them, and upon them, in the *name, majesty, and authority* of God. And when it enters thus into the soul, it fills it with the *light of the glory* of the beamings of those *perfections* upon it; whereby it is made to cry out, *The voice of God, and not of man.*

“VIII. This *power*, whereby the *word* evidences itself to be the word of God, and not of man, is nothing else save that *authority* and *awful efficacy* which he puts forth in and by it over the minds and consciences of men, working divinely, and leaving effects of his glorious and omnipotent power in them and on them. It enters into the *conscience*, a territory exempt from the authority of creatures, and subject only to the dominion of God, it challenges, convinces, threatens, awakens, sets it a roaring, and the creation cannot quiet it again. It commands a calm, and the sea that was troubled before is smooth, and devils and men are not able to disturb its repose. It enters into the mind, opens its eyes, fills it with a glorious, clear, pure, and purifying *light*, and sets before it wonders before unknown, undiscerned in counsel and knowledge concerning God, ourselves, our sin, our duty, our danger, and our relief, the works, the ways, the counsels and purposes of God. It speaks to the will, converts it, and powerfully disengages it from what it was most engaged to, what it embraced, and was even glued to before, so that no art or force of eloquence, argument, fear, or hope, could make it quit its hold. It makes it hastily quit its embraces, and turn its bent another way, the quite opposite way, and with open arms embrace what nothing could make it look to before, takes away its aversion, makes it willingly not only go, but run after what it bore

the greatest aversion to before, and obstinately refuse to close with any other thing. It enters the affections, makes them rise from the ground, gives them such a divine touch, that though they may, through their fickle nature, be carried at a time by force another way, yet they never rest, but point heaven-ward. It comes to the soul, sunk under the pressure of unrelievable distresses, sticking in the *miry c'ay*, refusing comfort, and in appearance capable of none, it plucks it out of the clay, raises it out of the horrible pit, sets its *feet upon a rock*, fills it with joy, yea makes it exceeding joyful, while even all outward pressures and tribulation continue, yea are increased. It enters into the soul, lays hold on the reigning lusts to which all formerly had submitted, and that with delight, it tries and condemns those powerful criminals, makes the soul throw off the yoke, and join in the execution of its sentences against, and on them. Now where the case is thus stated, how can the soul that feels this powerful *word*, that comes from the Lord most high, do otherwise than fall down, and own, *that God is in it of a truth?*

“IX. Wherein some may hereon object, ‘That many who have for a long time heard and perused this *word*, have not perceived this *light*, nor felt this *power*, and, on this supposition, seem exempted from any obligation to believe the *word*. I answer,

“1. Many who have spent not a few years in prying into the *works* of God in the world, have not discerned to this day the beaming evidence, and clear declarations of his glory in them; yet none will hereon say, that they are excusable, or that want of an *evidence* is chargeable on the works of God. And why should not the case be allowed the same as to the word? May they not have this *evidence*, though men do not discern it? And may not men, even on account of this *evidence*, be obliged to believe them?

“No wonder many discern not this *light*, and are not affected with it, since all men have put out their own eyes, or impaired by their own fault, that *faith* or *power* of discerning the voice of God, speaking either by his *word* or *works*, which our natures originally had. In

many this evil is increased, and this *power* further weakened by their shutting their eyes, and entertainment of prejudices manifestly unjust against God's word and works. Others turn away their eyes, and will not look to, or attend the *word* in that way wherein God ordains them to attend to it, that they may discern its *light*, and feel its *power*. And God has hereon judicially given many up to the *power* of Satan to be further blinded. And no wonder they, whose eyes the *God of this world* has blinded, should not discern the glory of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God shining into their minds.

"III. No wonder they should not discern this ; for God to this day has not given them *eyes to see, ears to hear, or hearts to perceive*. It is an act of sovereign grace, which God owes to none, to open their eyes, which they have wilfully blinded, and where he sees not meet to do this, it is not strange, that they are not affected with the clearest evidence."*

There are certain other difficulties propounded to the doctrine we maintain, and which, in part, have been anticipated already ; but which, as they have been the main stay of Pelagians and Arminians from the beginning, and are the *Chevaux de Bataille* of the adventurers (we use the word only for want of a better) of the present day, it may be proper to notice them briefly, together with the general principles on which they receive their solution. Some of the difficulties started in former times, both for want of space, and because they do not seem to be part of the scheme of principles, if scheme it may be called, of the men of the present day, whose views we have more immediately under consideration, we may pass over. It is not our business, and less our wish, to bring forth the errors of the heretics of former days for the pleasure of refuting them. But

* Halyburton on the Reason of Faith.

we confine ourselves to the less ambitious task of endeavouring, with some plain statements, to help to drive back to their former abodes, those which are coming out into open day among ourselves. So far as we have heard them urged in the present day, they may be reduced to the following:—

1. “How can the soul be partaker of spiritual life before its union with Christ, the fountain of life? Union is by faith, by which we come to Christ for life; but this renders it needless, because we have life before union.” Those who put this difficulty to their opponents in former days, at least acted with common honesty. They did not allege, as is now sometimes very disingenuously done, that their opponents maintained that life could be obtained without union to Christ. But taking the connection between union to Christ and life, as admitted, they proposed the above difficulty.

2. “If regeneration goes before faith, does not this make the giving of the Spirit antecedent to faith; and yet the Scriptures assert that by faith we receive the Spirit? Gal. iii. 14.

3. “Does not this doctrine further imply that the heart is purified before faith, while the Scriptures declare that it is purified by faith? Acts xv. 9.

4. “Are we not born again by the incorruptible seed of the word? 1 Pet. 1. 23. How can the word operate before it be believed?”

In regard, at least, to the first difficulty above proposed, we have always thought when we heard it propounded, that it was most justly liable to the censure, “Miserably shallow theology!” It indicates a total ignorance of the great doctrine of the union of Christ and believers in the glorious covenant of re-

demption. Those who hold this doctrine maintain that Christ is the Head of all his elect members given to him of the Father, that he is their surety, that as such he hath purchased all divine saving blessings, that in him all fulness dwells, and his substitution in the room of his elect members being accepted of the Father, there is thus such a relation established between them and Him as is justly called union, and in virtue of which they obtain all saving blessings. These blessings designed in the eternal purpose of God, purchased by the Son for his redeemed, laid up in him, in whom, as Mediator, (Is. lxi. 1.) the Holy Spirit resides,—the Spirit goeth forth in the season and order eternally designed of the Father, and actually confers, in possession and enjoyment, the blessings which are theirs by covenant-union with the Head. In virtue of Christ's suretyship, the blessings are the elect sinner's in right, even as the inheritance may be the heir's, though yet an ignorant uninstructed child. He has really a relation to the Proprietor or Head, in whom the inheritance is vested. He has a right and title to pardon, and all saving blessings through this relation or union. He has what old divines called "absolution in heaven." But it issues in absolution on earth through the active and actual operation of the Holy Spirit in the sinner himself.

This is admirably discussed in very few condensed sentences, by Halyburton, on Regeneration and Justification, who thus sums up one of his chapters:—

"By the foregoing propositions it appears that though the complete mystical union betwixt Christ and elect sinners is not before faith, yet there are several sorts of *unions* before it, and each of them attended with its own special use and influence. . . .

"1. Christ and they are *one in the decree*; which yet

infers nothing, says Witsius, but that in time they *shall be actually united*.

“2. They are *one federally*, or as others express it, *legally*, by virtue of *the covenant of redemption*, wherein Christ is constituted *Head* of the *elect*, and *Surety* substitute in their *stead*,—which yet infers no present alteration in their *state*, but leaves them as *before*, until, in the *order agreed on*, in that transaction they are brought out of it.

“3. They are *one in nature*, Christ taking part with the *children* herein, that he *might redeem them*, being our *near kinsman*.

“They are *one really*, though upon their part only *passively*, when the Spirit of Christ, in his name, takes possession of, and unites them to Christ. There are *two bonds of union*, the Spirit on the *part of Christ*, and *faith* on *ours*. Union must begin on His part; and His taking hold on us is the cause of our taking hold of Him, and so must be, in order of nature, before. These things are not contested; and yet are of chief use in the business in hand.

“XII. 'Tis likewise apparent from what has been discoursed, that the sinner's discharge advances by steps; some of which do precede faith.

“1. There is that *fundamental* or *general justification*, as Charnock and Witsius call it, when Christ was discharged. This is in time antecedent to justification.

“2. There is that *absolution in heaven* which we have cleared and confirmed above. This is not in *time*, but in *order of nature* only, antecedent to faith.

“There is *justification strictly* and *properly* so called, which immediately follows faith.”

Our author proceeds to apply these principles to the difficulties already noticed; and beginning with that we have marked 1. he answers them with a brevity, clearness, and terseness, we could not hope to equal by any language of ours. We therefore make no apology for the following additional extract:—

“*Obj.* 4. How can the soul be partaker of spiritual life before its union with Christ the fountain of life? Union is by faith, by which we come to Christ for life: but the

order asserted renders this errand needless, because we have life before union.

Ans. 1. We have before cleared that there are several kinds of union before complete mystical union. And as to this, Orthodox divines, the most zealous opposers of Antinomianism not excepted, do agree. And each of these unions are attended with special advantageous influences with respect to the elect.

"2. To answer more closely, this passive union, as we called it above, flowing from the Spirit of Christ, its taking possession and working a vital principle, must, in order of nature, precede all acts of ours. Union must begin on his part. The first uniting act belongs to the living principle. The Spirit enters into the body and actuates it, and the body, by life derived from the Spirit, cleaves again to the soul. Just so Christ the Head, by his Spirit, first actuates the dead sinner, and he thus enlivened by this derived life, cleaves unto Christ again.

"3. 'Tis hence evident, that it has no life, but upon Christ's account, and what is derived from him.

"4. It actively receives no life, till by faith it is ingrafted in him, and comes to him.

"5. Upon the sinner's coming to Christ, he receives the life of justification. He that is absolved, especially when in himself he deserved to die, receives his life, as he that is condemned loses his.

"6. By faith we receive the life of sanctification, and that in a two-fold sense: 1. By our closing with Christ, or coming to him, and the view that the soul then gets of him, the principle of life formed in the soul gets life, is quickened, enlivened, and graces are put into action. Till this view is got, all lies as it were dead. Also, 2. By the continued exercise of faith, the increases and daily supplies of grace are conveyed for carrying on the life of sanctification. Thus it is betwixt the vine-stock and ingrafted branch. The stock sends up quickening influences to the graft; the branch thus enlivened, first cleaves to the stock, and then the union being completed, and all conveyances opened, life in abundance is sent from the root, whereby it sends forth leaves, flowers, and fruit, each in their place and season.

"7. The life of comfort is wholly by faith. And this is the life of life. There is no comfort but by faith.

"8. Eternal life in right and possession are by faith. And this is sufficient to remove this difficulty.

"*Obj.* 5. Does not this make the collation of the Spirit antecedent to faith? And yet it is by faith we receive the Spirit, Gal. iii. 14.

"*Ans.* 1. The Spirit is received passively or improperly in order to build us up a meet habitation, lively temples, &c., and we being thus prepared, he is actively by faith received as an inhabitant to dwell in us, and act in us, as occasion requires.

"2. They who choose the other side of the question, must allow that the Spirit is given to work faith, and so fall under their own argument.

"*Obj.* 6. Does not this teach that the heart is purified before faith, contrary to Acts xv. 9, that tells us the heart is purified by faith?

"*Ans.* 1. Faith itself is, as Dr. Owen well observes, a principal part of the restored image of God, and so of our purity.* What the objectors answer to this, may be applied to the other parts of the same image.

"2. What the Spirit of God begins in renovation, is progressively carried on by the exercise of faith, drawing, purifying virtue from Christ. And this is the intent of the text.

"*Obj.* 7. Is not the new creature begotten by the immortal seed of the word? Or, are we not born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever? 1 Pet. i. 23. Now how can the word have any effect without the interveniency of faith? It does not profit, but as it is received by faith; therefore faith must be antecedent to the new nature.

"*Ans.* 1. Not to take any advantage from the additional clause, fixing the sense of the word here mentioned, I ask, since faith comes by hearing the word of God, (Rom. x.) and the word can have no influence but by faith, must not faith be before faith? The argument is the same.

"2. The plain intent of such words, in both cases mentioned, and the like is, that while in the gospel dispensa-

* Owen on the Spirit, p. 290.

tion the word is objectively proposed, and the mind conversant about it, the Spirit of the Lord, using it as the instrument, mean, or channel of his influences, works faith, begets or forms the new creature.”*

We do not think we can make this interesting subject clearer by lengthened discussion. Yet we are anxious, if possible, to put down the pretence that the doctrines we are opposing have really been the doctrines of our leading divines in former times, a pretence which has obtained some currency by laying hold of isolated passages, when the question is not argumentatively discussed. We may refer shortly, therefore, in the next place, to the opinions of Charnock, referred to by Halyburton.

There are three leading ways by which we may ascertain the views of this writer, 1st. By ascertaining what are his views of man's natural condition as a sinner; 2d. What his views are of the nature of regeneration; and 3d. Of what he calls the efficient of regeneration.

In regard to the first, we have seen in the first chapter of this work that he holds it to be total in the whole man, understanding, will, and affections; and though he does not hold it to be physical, in the sense that the substance of the soul is destroyed, or the faculties lost, so that there is no longer an understanding, or a will, or affections,—in short, a soul in man at all; yet he holds it to be physical in the sense of utter inability in all the powers and faculties of man to any spiritual good, and proves that there is not only unfitness, but unwillingness, “not only unfitness and unwillingness, but inability;” and argues “no privation can be removed, but by the

* Halyburton on Regeneration and Justification.

introduction of another form ; as when a man is blind, that blindness which is a privation of sight, cannot be removed, *without bringing in a power of seeing again*. Well then, since there is an unfitness, unwillingness, inability in a man to answer his end, there is a necessity of a new life, a new nature, a new righteousness.”*

“ Well, then, we must be born again. ’Tis not a dead nature, nor a dead faith, can produce living fruit for God. We may as well read without eyes, walk without legs, act without life, as perform any service to God without a new nature ; no ! we cannot perform the least. A dead man can no more move his finger, than his whole body.”†

He argues that contrary natures cannot be united : “ ’Tis necessary that this union (the natural union to Satan) should be broken before we can partake of the influence of another head. The diabolical nature and principle, therefore, which we have got by sin must be removed, and another nature, *which is divine, put in the place first, (in order of nature) before we can be united to Christ, and enjoy the benefits of union with him.*”‡ This doctrine is demonstrated at great length, and with variety of illustration, so that it is impossible it can be mistaken.

In treating of the nature of regeneration his doctrine is not less clear and unequivocal. He defines it thus : “ Regeneration is a mighty and powerful change wrought in the soul by the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit, wherein a vital principle, a new habit, the law of God, and a divine nature are *put into, and framed in the heart*, enabling it to act holily and pleasingly to God, and to grow up therein

* Vol. ii. p. 6.

† Ibid. p. 18.

‡ Ibid.

to eternal glory." "'Tis a certain spiritual and *supernatural principle*, or *permanent form*, per modum actus primi, *infused by God*, whereby it is made partaker of the divine nature, and enabled to act for God."

Still more unquestionably, if not more clearly, is his meaning brought out, in distinguishing it from other states of a Christian, thus: "1. It differs from conversion. Regeneration is a spiritual *change*; conversion is a spiritual *motion*. In regeneration *there is a power conferred*; conversion is *the exercise of this power*. In regeneration there is given us a principle to turn; conversion is our actual turning," &c. "First, conversion is related to regeneration, as the effect to the cause. Life precedes motion, and is the cause of motion." . . . "In renewing us God *gives us a power*; in converting us he excites that power. Men are naturally dead, and have a stone upon them. Regeneration is a rolling away the stone from the heart, and a raising to newness of life; and the conversion is as natural to a regenerate man, as motion is to a living body. A *principle of activity* will produce action."

"2. In regeneration man is wholly passive," &c.

In distinguishing it from justification, he adds: "Regeneration is a physical change, and real as when a man is raised from death to life; 'tis a filling the soul with another nature, Eph. ii. 1. 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.'"

4. In distinguishing it from sanctification he says: "Faith purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9, 'purifying their hearts by faith,' and is the cause of the gradual sanctification; but *faith is part of this new creature*, and that which is a part cannot be the cause of the whole,

for then it would be the cause of itself. We are not regenerated by faith, though we are sanctified by faith; but we are new created by the Spirit of God infusing faith into us. Faith produceth the acts of grace, but not the habit of grace, because it is itself a part of this habit; for all graces are but one in the habit or new creature,"* &c.

He is equally explicit and distinct to the same purpose in showing what it is not. He holds that though the essence of the faculties be the same, yet that "the soul is so much changed by these new habits, that it is, as it were, a new soul, a new understanding, a new will,"—that it is not an awakening of a man asleep, or a stirring up of old principles, but raising a man dead, and a conferring of new.

In showing positively what it is, he says: "'Tis an universal change of the whole man. 'Tis a new creature—not only a new power, or new faculty. This, as well as creation, extends to every part, understanding, will, conscience, affections,—all were corrupted by sin, all are renewed by grace."†

In regard to the efficient of regeneration, he holds it to be God alone. He holds man's impotency to be chiefly in the will, though total in all the faculties. He holds it to be innate; that the understanding being mere darkness, nothing can be rightly represented to the will to pursue and follow; that men can neither produce nor co-operate to the production of the new nature; that "God is as much in the new creation as the old." Nay, that the old was easier than the new. As in the new there must first be destruction, and then creation,—that man cannot prepare himself thereto

* Charnock, vol. ii. pp. 42, 43.

† Ibid. p. 46.

—darkness cannot prepare itself for its own expulsion. He demonstrates there is a contrariety between the natural man and the gospel. “Let the light, the most excellent thing in the world, glare upon a man that hath sore eyes, he will turn away from it, or shut his eyes against it.”

While Charnock holds the great doctrine that ordinarily the Spirit, by his own almighty gracious power, regenerates the soul with the word, as suited to man's rational and moral nature ; in other words, to a being having still a soul—yet he denies any power whatever in the word. The power is not in the instrument, but the agent ; and therefore he writes thus in a way that can neither be mistaken nor perverted : “Thus, man, by the help of instituted privileges, doth not produce this work of regeneration in himself without a supernatural grace attending them. Ordinances cannot renew a man ; but the arm of God which doth manage them, edgeth them into efficacy, as the arm that wields the sword gives the blow. Means are the showers of heaven, but they can no more make the heart fruitful till some gracious principle be put in, than the beams of the sun, the dews of heaven, and the water-pots of the clouds can make a barren ground bring forth flowers without a change in the nature of the soil, and new roots planted in it. All the spectacles in the world cannot cure a man's eyes ; *he must have a visive faculty to make use of them* ; our faculty must be cured before we can exercise it about objects, or use means proper to that faculty. All persuasions will not prevail with a dead man. The fairest discourses, the most undeniable arguments, the most moving rhetoric, will not stir or affect him, till God takes

away the stone from the grave, and raise him to life. The report of the prophets will do no good, *without the revelation of God's arm*; (Is. liii. 1.) because all these things do not work in a physical way, as drugs or plasters, which attain their end without any active concurrence of the patient; but in a moral way: the will, therefore, and nature must first be changed before those can do any good."

After proving the inefficacy, even of miracles, to change the heart, he adds, not less forcibly than quaintly: "The easiness of faith upon the apparition and instruction of one risen from the dead, was the opinion of one of the damned, Luke xvi. 30. 'If one went to them from the dead, they will repent.' But this opinion was contradicted by Abraham, (ver. 31.) who positively asserts, 'If they did not hear Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' . . . If that then which is above the hand of nature, and bears the character of omnipotency upon the breasts of it, doth not work upon men's hearts and wills of themselves, surely nature itself cannot turn the heart to God." With much more to the same purpose.*

One other passage on this point, from this author, and we must forbear: "Ascribe nothing to instruments, either men or means. 'Tis not the will of man; but another's will. Without the efficacious working of the Spirit, the gospel itself is but a dead letter, the Spirit only quickens it. It is not outward teaching and blowing, which of itself will kindle these sparks; an instrument cannot act without the strength of an agent to manage it; the chisel forms

* Vol. ii. pp. 100, 101.

the stone into a statue, but *according to the strength and skill of the artificer moving it,*" &c.

Such is not the testimony of a solitary writer of that age; but it is the universal language of the divines of that school and age.

Manton maintains the same doctrine; see vol. v., sermons iii. iv., on 1 Pet. i. 23. On the subject "How the word concurreth to regeneration," he is able and clear, and states—

"1. There is a two-fold operation upon the soul, physical and moral. The physical operation is the infusion of life; the moral operation is in a way of reason and persuasion," &c. He shows that men are drawn and taught. "Well now, as to the *physical* or powerful operation, the word is not the instrumental cause, but God worketh immediately; for the word written and preached, voice, letters, and syllables, *are not subjects capable of receiving spiritual life to convey it to us.* I say, there is not any such virtue in the sound of syllables and sentences of the word, but the Spirit doth this work immediately. But as to the *moral* operation in a way of argument and persuasion; so the word is the instrument. There are other occasional helps, but this is the *instituted* means. Word and sacraments are *instrumenta quædam tenus moralia*, in a sort, moral instruments; the word to beget grace, and the sacraments to confirm it," &c.

"2. Though the infusion of life be *God's immediate work*, yet because 'tis done in concomitancy and association with the word, therefore the effect is ascribed to the word, as well as to the Spirit. So the law of God is said to convert the soul, Ps. xix. 7. And the gospel is said to be the power of God unto

salvation, Rom. i. 16, that is, God doth not ordinarily work any other way,—and hath tied us to depend on him in the use of this means for such an effect. As the stars shed abroad their influences by air and clouds, to make the earth fruitful, and insinuate their effects by other natural causes; so doth God convey his power in a *concomitancy with the word, though not by the word; that is, there is not any natural force put into it to produce such an effect.*”

This latter opinion that “there is a natural force put into this word,” is the heresy of those who deny an immediate operation of the Spirit of God in renewing the soul. They in reality deify the creature; for so far as we can understand their doctrine—and it is stated plainly enough—it is that wherever the word is spoken by the human voice, written or printed on paper, or spoken in the providence of God, and thus presented to the eye of the mind—which eye can perceive it—then and there is there a divine power operating to, and intending the salvation of the recipient, though spiritually he “hath neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor a heart to perceive, as it is this day.”

And corresponding to this is their notion of saving faith, that it is a simple assent of the understanding, “nothing more and nothing less and nothing else,” of the very same nature as any other faith; and by such a faith is man regenerated. This doctrine makes regeneration a human thing, brought about not by a divine but human agent, namely, unregenerate man; though they assert by a divine instrument, viz. the word; but which, nevertheless, is an instrument, a created thing, operating in no other way than by a

general law; and regeneration is thus no otherwise of grace or of God than any natural effect is of God; which takes place under the administration of his providence. In plain terms it is not a special work of grace at all.

Totally the reverse is the opinion of some of the great men of former days, such as Howe, who dreaded the enthusiastic notions of the familists, who threw discredit on the word, and asserted an internal light as of equal authority at least; and therefore strongly maintained the position of the word as an instrument in the great work of regeneration; and in like manner the position of faith as part of the Spirit's work in regenerating the soul. They held the divine nature of faith itself, while they maintained its presence in the work of regeneration; not a thing within the compass of man's natural faculties to put forth and so be regenerated, or in other words, regenerate himself; but an immediate special product of the divine operation of the Holy Ghost. They held it to be more than an assent of the understanding; they held it to be a state of the heart, a disposition, a habit, in short, a grace of the Spirit, involving not intellect merely, but will, affection, active reliance. Such is plainly the doctrine of Howe in his sermons on the text, 1 John v. 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

He describes faith not merely as assent, but consent, reception of Christ, and resignation of ourselves to Christ. "It must carry with it, 1st. Suitable apprehensions concerning ourselves and concerning him. 2d. It includes in it some correspondent actings yet further to be considered. 3d. It must be attended with some suitable qualifying adjuncts, and, 4th. It must

be attended with some concomitant dispositions and affections that are proper thereunto."

He proceeds to illustrate these particulars, but alleging under each respectively, 1st. That we must consider ourselves under obligation to be ruled by God; 2d. Understand ourselves to be miserable creatures; 3d. Offending creatures, 4th. Depraved, habitually depraved. That we must accept of Christ, and resign ourselves to him, and for this that we must consider, 1st. His original power over us, as in the beginning of the creation of God. 2d. As a constituted Ruler. 3d. As a Saviour; and thereupon as a Redeemer, as a Reconciler, that was to save, by redeeming and reconciling perishing, lost, guilty creatures to an offended God. 4th. He must be understood and apprehended as a vital head.

2. There must be suitable acts, even in those of receiving him and resigning ourselves. First, there must be the act of trust; and, secondly, the act of subjection; otherwise we do not receive him, and resign ourselves to him suitably to the apprehensions that are given to us of that object.

1st. Trust. An absolute trust. There is both receiving and resigning. 2d. As both these together do carry in them trust, so they carry in them subjection; there is not only committing ourselves, but there is also submitting ourselves.

3d. "There must be some qualifying adjuncts of these acts of receiving and resigning, especially these two, totality and vitality. It may be, you will remember them the better for the sound's sake."

"1st. There must be totality with these acts of the one part and the other, to wit, with reference to the object, and with reference to the subject; consider the

act of reception with reference to the object; we are to receive a whole Christ; consider the act of resignation with respect to the subject, and we are to resign our whole selves. Reception must be with totality, a reception of resignation must be with totality, a resignation of our whole selves.

"2d. There must be vitality as to both these, as well as totality. There must be vital reception, and vital resignation; life must accompany these acts * * * and so when I come to give myself up it is not as a dead thing."

4th. There must be suitable concomitant affections, especially these two, reverence and joy.

After illustrating these particulars, Howe adds:—"This is believing Jesus to be the Christ. If you believe it to purpose, this is it. And pray think with yourselves, can it be any thing less than this? That faith that is short of this is both a nullity and an affront. A nullity, a vanity, as to you, and an affront as to God and Christ."

Two things are self-evident from these views of the nature of faith. 1st. That he who holds them does hold faith to be something else than a mere assent of the understanding. 2d. That no Christian can hold such a view of faith, without holding that it is divine in its nature and origin, the fruit of spiritual life, that it is of the operation of God.

He proceeds to consider what he calls "divine birth," and from the whole nature of it shows that there can be no faith without it, or without Sonship. "Both this faith and regeneration do owe themselves to the same primary sovereign cause, the Divine Spirit, which shows them most strictly to be connected. This faith is from the Holy Ghost, and this new birth

is from the Holy Ghost also; there is but one cause of both, they are produced by the agency of one and the same Spirit, and therefore cannot but be connected. This faith, wherever it is, is a God-begotten thing; it is a thing that is of divine descent." In opposition to the idea that believing that Jesus is the Christ is "one of the easiest things in the world," he affirms that this notion arises from "too low thoughts of the same faith. This believing, in particular, Jesus to be the Christ, the difference lies here, whether this believing is to be reckoned a divine or merely a human thing. If it be looked upon as a thing of mere human original, then any body would wonder that upon one's believing Jesus to be the Christ, such a thing as this should be said of him, he is born of God, the greatest thing sure that can be said of a mortal creature."

There is a class of writers of a later date, whose names have been most improperly borrowed to lend authority to the doctrines which we have styled a mixture of Socinianism, Pelagianism, and Arminianism; such as Jonathan Edwards, Edward Williams, and Andrew Fuller. All of whom are the farthest removed possible from any such doctrines.

Edward Williams in his *Work on Equity and Sovereignty* is particularly able, convincing, and interesting on the doctrine of subjective grace.

After stating three kinds of grace, and speaking of the third, or illuminating grace of God in regeneration, he says:—

"Hence it is obvious, as general conclusions on the subject: First, that grace displayed in the word, though *sovereign* in its origin, compared with the unworthiness of its objects, is only the benevolence of God in exercise, in relation to the plan and order of *moral government*. It regards man as moral agents, with freedom of will to accept

or to reject it; and therefore can be of no other nature but that of *moral means* in the manner of a proposal. The excellency of the objects proposed, as God himself and his infinite perfections, Christ in his person and work, the Holy Spirit and all his riches of merciful influence, when only announced, and proposed, to the intellectual and active powers of men, can be considered in no other light but as grace in the signification of *means*. For however free and sincere the proposal on the part of God, and however full and rich the display of truth and blessings, these will not profit if not 'mixed with faith in them that hear.'

"Secondly, we may again remark, that the grace which is merely *objective* is properly and exclusively a *moral* cause; that is, a cause whose effect depends on the manner in which it is received or rejected, improved or abused. For though it has a *moral tendency* of the best kind, it may prove, through the fault of the free agent, useless or even destructive. The very same 'grace of God that bringeth salvation,' proves to one 'the wisdom and power of God,' to another 'a stumbling-block and foolishness,' to one a moral cause of life, and to another an occasion of death and destruction, as the heart is lowly and virtuous, or proud and depraved. It is as seed sown; if it falls into good ground, it brings forth acceptable fruit, but if upon the trodden path or the strong places of unrenewed minds, it fails of success.

"Thirdly, the grace which consists in the Holy Spirit's immediate energy is a *physical* cause; that is, a cause which produces its appropriate effects without depending on the intellect, the will, or the moral agency of the subject. This has been sometimes called a *moral* cause; but very improperly, because it is not founded on its relation to moral government, nor does the effect depend on the choice and exertion of the recipient. True Christians are born, 'not of the will of man but of God.' 'For it is God that worketh in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' This grace is not an object of choice, any more than a difference of peculiar natures, and therefore the effect is produced physically. And thus were Adam's primitive righteousness and holiness produced when created with him. What is thus effected in the soul is a *new* nature which influences the choice of the agent without dis-

turbing his freedom; because it is the province and an excellency of rational beings to choose according to the influence of their natures respectively. It is also a *divine* nature, which qualifies the soul 'to exercise itself unto godliness,' and to act according to righteousness and true holiness. Nor does the idea of *supernatural or spiritual*, by which both the cause and its appropriate effect are sometimes denominated, militate against the propriety of the term *physical* being applied to it, in the sense now explained, because those terms are themselves included in this denomination. Some indeed have, by way of objection, and perhaps others through mistake, confounded physical influence with the production of some distinct physical faculty of mind; and the divine energy for which I plead implies no such thing; any more than the creating of our first parents, which all must allow to be a physical act, implies that their spiritual life which was effected by it was a physical faculty."—Pp. 317—320.

Again, "Subjective grace, under the notion of an *effect produced*, is a new spiritual nature, a divine, holy principle of true virtue. It is a direct and an immediate effect of sovereign gracious energy, by which it is distinguished from a mere natural difference between one person and another. It is a new nature, as what is graciously superinduced, instead of that which was lost by the first apostasy; *spiritual*, not only because it is produced by the operation of the Divine Spirit, but also because it resembles him; a *nature*, to distinguish it from a mere physical faculty or power of the mind. For though the divine influence producing it is properly denominated physical, as contradistinguished from what is moral or suasive, yet the produced effect is not a physical faculty, but a spiritual nature. It is said to be *divine*, because it is the operation of God, not after the manner of effects produced by second causes, but by his immediate energy on the mind," &c.—Ib. pp. 327—328.

It is unnecessary to pursue his admirable illustrations of "sovereign subjective grace, its peculiar nature, necessity, and importance." These points he explains and illustrates; and proves from reason,

scripture, and analogy. We cannot help, however, quoting the following passages :—

“I. If there be no direct sovereign influence, no subjective grace, but what is involved in, or inseparably connected with the verbal testimony, then no one can be the subject of salvation but he who *understands* that testimony. For of what use is a testimony to him who does not understand the terms or language in which it is delivered? To him it is no testimony, as to an idiot, the deaf and dumb, or a child uninstructed through the neglect of the better informed. Is it reasonable to suppose, that the Spirit of the Lord is so absolutely restrained to the testimony, that no one can be possessed of *salvation* without understanding it? But salvation from sin and wrath is inconceivable, except we admit a divine influence and a spiritual regeneration. The inference therefore is unavoidable, that there is a sovereign subjective grace, in some instances, without the word, or else there can be no salvation for infants, idiots, the deaf and dumb, or any human beings, but such as have a verbal testimony conveyed to the understanding. The conclusion is not that all such persons *must* be saved, but on the principle opposed, that none *can* be saved; which is a presumptuous limitation of God's mercy, and a degrading reflection on Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, as if he *could* not save any without the use of words; not to add, how revolting the thought is to Christian feelings.

“II. If there be no divine direct influence, none but what is inseparable from the word as its vehicle or instrument, the sentiment must be sought either from revelation or from the supposition of subjective grace, as before stated, being inconsistent with reason and analogy. Many passages have been produced as direct proofs of our doctrine, and no passage is objected which is not capable of being explained in perfect consistency with those proofs. It follows, therefore, as the opposite interpretations cannot be both true, that the one must be more consistent with the analogy of faith than the other. Here also we may rest secure till something plausible be brought on the other side. Nor does it appear that the objectors plead the *reasonableness* of their sentiment, abstracted from divine

testimony, for they do not pretend to establish it by rational principles, or by fair analogy. But we appeal to both, as well as to direct scripture proofs, in harmony with the whole current of divine revelation.

“III. As the sentiment, that the divine testimony *alone* effects a spiritual change in the human mind, is incompatible with the actual depravity of human nature, ascertained both by scripture and universal experience; so the notion that there is no *direct* influence, none but what is dependent upon, or inseparable from a verbal testimony, confounds two modes of divine operation which are, in their own nature, perfectly distinct. What can be plainer, than the fact, that the verbal testimony of scripture is of the nature of moral means, and that such means produce a moral effect according to the moral principle of the agent? ‘Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?’ or ‘does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?’ Every moral agent, unavoidably, must have *some* principle, either good or bad, *prior* to the declaration of the testimony. Is it a good principle? Then it must be such without any concurrence of the word; for, from the supposition, it was in the subject before the verbal testimony was made known to him. Is it a bad principle? Then how comes it to be changed? If by a direct influence the point in question is given up; but if by the word, a contradiction is involved, that moral means are not moral means, but some physical influence producing a moral principle. If it be said, that divine influence changes the moral principle by *means* of the word, this involves the same contradiction as before; as it declares a moral mean, the verbal testimony, to be not a moral mean, but a physical operation. It supposes divine influence changing the unalterable truth of things. It ascribes to a moral instrumentality what in the nature of things *belongs* to a physical cause exclusively. On the theory under consideration, if there be any conversion effected, it is a change of the nature of the word into what it was not before, and not the nature of the man, or his moral principle.”—Ib. pp. 334—337.

We regret we cannot quote his beautiful illustration from scripture analogies, not less conclusive than

beautiful. One we are tempted to give; chiefly because it suggests what we apprehend lies at the bottom of all,—the obtuseness of men on this subject, viz., that they do not believe man's spiritual life to be totally gone in every sinner till divinely renewed:

“We may find another illustration in the *animal* life. No animal can subsist without food, air, and exercise, more or less; but we cannot infer thence that these could *generate* the principle of life. This is *pre-supposed*, and contributes to the existence of the exercised functions, no less than the (*pabulum vite*) the means of subsistence. The vital energies are, in reality, the result of both combined. And here the question is not, how one life propagates itself, in virtue of the divine command, ‘Be fruitful and multiply,’ or the appointed course of nature; but how life, when lost, is again restored. When a lamp is extinct, how is it to be lighted? When a plant has lost the vital sap, how is it revived? When a body is dead (as that of Lazarus or Jesus), how is it re-animated? As to the first, it is not by the accumulation of fuel; as to the second, not by the surrounding elements; and as to the last, not by the exertions of man.

“I am aware how a Pelagian divine or philosopher would endeavour to evade this illustration by substituting another. Though the flame is extinguished, he would say, a little vital air will rekindle it; though the plant droops and withers, water will revive it; and though life is apparently gone, it is only a temporary suspension, the application of warmth and of stimulants will restore it. It is acknowledged, that illustrations are not identical with arguments; comparisons are explanatory of the thing explained. I have therefore no objection to a Pelagian explaining his opinion in this way. He considers the divine life of the soul as *partially* gone; and that it may be recovered merely by the application of *means*, such as education, instruction, moral suasion, and the like. I consider the same life as *totally* gone; and that no moral means, without a sovereign spiritual influence, are adequate to restore

it. Which opinion, if founded in truth, is to be sought, not from illustrations, but from scriptural arguments."—Ib. 346—348.

There is another writer of this class (Fuller) who is not less explicit on this doctrine, and yet, strange to say, he is by some of the adversaries of it alleged to be opposed to it. Let these two passages, however, suffice to determine the point. The first is from his seventh Letter, entitled REGENERATION NECESSARY TO BELIEVING, pp. 592, 593, of vol. iii. of his works:—

“ I allow with Dr. Owen that the Spirit of God makes use of ‘the reasons, motives, and persuasive arguments which the word affords, to affect the mind; and that converted persons are able to give some account of the considerations whereby they were prevailed upon.’ But I also think with him that ‘the *whole* work of the Spirit in our conversion does not consist herein; but that there is a real physical work whereby he imparts spiritual life to the souls of all who are truly regenerated.’ Mr. M‘Lean rejects the idea of *physical* influence, and seems to confound it with something corporeal or mechanical. If I understand the term *physical*, with respect to influence, it is opposed to moral. That influence is denominated moral that works upon the mind by motives, or considerations which induce it to this or that, and all beyond this is physical and supernatural. When God created the soul of man originally in righteousness and true holiness, I suppose it must be allowed to have been a physical work. Man certainly was not induced by motives to be righteous any more than to be rational; yet there was nothing corporeal or mechanical in it. It is thus that I understand Dr.

Owen in the passage just quoted, in which, while he admits the use of moral suasion, he denies that the whole work of conversion consists in it. . . . But if divine influence consist in any thing distinct from the influence of the work, it must be supernatural and physical."

In reply to Mr. Booth's doctrine of regeneration by the word, Fuller makes the objector to say, "But is it not true that the human mind is in all cases drawn into exercise by motives?" and replies, "I believe it is. The question then will turn upon this hinge: In what manner does the Holy Spirit influence the mind so as to give efficacy to those powerful motives which are addressed to it in the gospel? Is it by giving an additional energy to the motives which they do not in themselves possess, or is it by giving to the soul a susceptibility of truth? The answer to this question must be decided by the Scriptures.

"Now the Scriptures represent blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, as the reason why men cannot believe, John xii. 39, 40. But if these things be the only bar to believing, is it unreasonable to believe that divine influence should be exerted in the removal of them? Does not the manner of speaking which the Scriptures use, convey to us this idea: That in turning a sinner to himself, God *not only presents the light before him*, but *gives him eyes to see*; that he not only proclaims to him the joyful sound, but gives him ears to hear it? Or, to speak without a figure, that he not only presents the truth, but gives him a heart to understand it, in order that he may convert and be healed.

"Nothing can operate as a motive, unless the mind

be susceptible of it. The most powerful motives furnished by the gospel are, therefore, *no motives to an unrenewed mind*. But if the Lord open the heart, we attend to the things that are spoken.”*

The name of the great Jonathan Edwards has very strangely been employed, if not directly, at least indirectly, to give currency to the system of opinions we are opposing; though there is nothing plainer to a mind of ordinary fairness, than that his whole system of doctrine is in every way contrary to them. Though even his name would not shake our confidence in principles, so demonstratively consistent with the word of God, the whole analogy of faith, and consonant with the condition of man, viewed as the subject of eternal salvation; it would certainly, however, make us pause, and very maturely consider our position—though neither names like his, nor the authority of the whole Reformed churches has any weight with the petulant humours of some youthful aspirants for the fame of Luther and Calvin.

One has only to open Edwards on the Religious Affections, particularly Part iii., to see that his scheme of doctrine, in every part, harmonizes entirely with what we maintain.

In determining the Scriptural meaning of the phrase *spiritual* he says, “So that although natural men may be the subjects of many influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many Scriptures, yet they are not, in the sense of the Scripture, spiritual persons; neither are any of those effects, common gifts, qualities, or affections, that are from the in-

* Morris's *Memoirs of the Rev. A. Fuller*, second edition, p. 301.

fluence of the Spirit of God upon them called spiritual. The great difference lies in these two things:—

“1. The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them as his proper lasting abode, and to influence their hearts as a principle of new nature, or a divine supernatural spring of life and action. The Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the saints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode and everlasting dwelling-place. (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; John xiv. 16, 17.) And He is represented as being there so united to the faculties of the soul, that he becomes a principle or spring of a new nature and life.

“So the saints are said to live by Christ, living in them, Gal. ii. 20. Christ, by his Spirit, not only is in them, but lives in them; they live by his life. His Spirit is united to them, as a principle of life in them. They not only drink living waters, but this living water becomes a well or fountain of water in the soul, springing up into spiritual and everlasting life, (John iv. 14.) and thus becomes a principle of life in them. This living water the evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, chap. vii. 38, 39. The light of the Sun of righteousness does not only shine upon them, but is so communicated to them that they shine also and become little images of that Sun which shines upon them. . . On the other hand, though the Spirit of God may many ways influence natural men, yet because it is not thus communicated to them as an indwelling principle, they do not derive any denomination or character from it; for there being no *union*, it is not their *own*. The light may shine upon a body that is very

dark or black ; and though that body be the subject of the light, yet because the light becomes no principle of light to it, so as to cause the body to shine, hence that body does not properly receive its denomination from it so as to be called a *lightsome body*. So the Spirit of God acting upon the soul only, without communicating itself to be an active principle in it, cannot denominate it *spiritual*. A body that continues black, may be said *not to have light*, though the light shines upon it ; so natural men are said *not to have the Spirit*, (Jude 19.) *sensual or natural*, as the word is elsewhere rendered, *having not the Spirit*."

Again—"There is, if the Scriptures are of any use to teach us any thing, a spiritual, supernatural understanding of divine things *peculiar* to the saints." After adducing many passages to prove this, and also proving that the spiritual understanding of the saints is altogether different in its very nature from that which natural men have, he says: "From hence it may be surely inferred, wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of perception, which is in its nature perfectly diverse from all that natural men can have, it must consist in having a certain kind of ideas, or sensations of mind which are simply diverse from all that can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to say that it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual sense which the souls of natural men have not, as is evident by what has been repeatedly observed. But I have already shown what that new spiritual sense is which the saints have given them in regeneration."*

* Section iv.

In his chapter on efficacious grace, where he is directly arguing the subject controversially, we may expect his language to be not less definite and distinct. He argues the question against Whitby and others, who hold that all that the Spirit does in conversion is to bring moral motives and inducements to the mind, and set them before the understanding, and the like. He sets himself to discuss it in form, and we find such passages as the following: Eph. ii. 15, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." "Mr. Beach observes, 'this text does not mean that their faith is so God's gift as not to be of themselves, as is most evident to any who reads the original.' This is certainly a great mistake. What I suppose he means is, that the relative *that*, being of the neuter gender, and the word *πιστις* of the feminine, they do not agree together. But if he would translate the Greek relative *that thing*, viz., the thing last spoken of, all the difficulty vanishes.* Such Scriptures as these, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'Not I, but the grace of God that is in me,' Gal. ii. 20, 'Not I, but Christ liveth in me,' prove efficacious grace. The various actions of men that are unavoidable, are not left to men's indifference without divine ordering and efficacy, so as to be possible to fail. They are often in the Scripture the matter of God's promises. How often does God promise reformation! How often does God promise that great revival of religion in the latter days! Dr. Whitby seems to deny any physical influence at all of the Spirit of God on the will; and allows an in-

* Vide Beza in loc.

fluence by moral suasion and causes only.* This is to deny that the Spirit of God does any thing at all except inspiring the prophets, and giving the means of grace, with God's ordination of this in his providence. If God do any thing physically, what he does must be efficacious and irresistible." He does not hesitate to pronounce "the dispute about grace being resistible or irresistible" to be "perfect nonsense;" and that "those that deny infusion of grace by the Holy Spirit must of necessity deny the Spirit to do any thing at all."

"The opponents of efficacious grace and physical operation may be challenged to show that it is possible to show that any creature should become righteous without a physical operation, either a being created with the habit of righteousness, or its being immediately infused."

In regard to objective or outward means or moral suasion, he says, "Moses speaks of the great moral means that God had used with the children of Israel to enlighten them, and convince and persuade them; but of their being yet unpersuaded and unconverted; and gives this as a reason that God had not given them a heart to perceive, as Deut. xxix. 4, 'Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.' The Scripture plainly makes a distinction *between exhibiting light, or means of instruction and persuasion, and giving eyes to see, circumcising the heart,*"† &c.

After a very full scripture proof of the doctrine of efficacious grace he says, "In efficacious grace

* Page 334.

† 50. The italics are not Edwards's.

we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz., our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive, and wholly active.”*

If the following passage does not describe man's inability to be natural as well as moral, and indicate that the whole work of regeneration is, and must be entirely of God, we know not what language can convey it. In showing that saving grace differs not only in degree, but in nature and kind, from common grace or any thing that is found in natural men, he says, “A natural man has no degree of that relish and sense of spiritual things, or things of the Spirit, and of their divine truth and excellency which a godly *man* has, as is evident by 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ Here a natural man is represented as perfectly destitute of any sense, perception, or discerning of those things. For by the words, he neither does nor can know them, nor discern them. So far from it, that they are foolishness unto him. He is such a stranger to them, that he knows not what the talk of such things means.”†

In fact it is the doctrine of Edwards that wherever there is any thing good, or tending to good in man, it is the immediate work of the Spirit of God.

We shall notice one other author justly celebrated for soundness of judgment, and Scriptural discernment,

* 60.

† 92. 9.

viz., the Rev. Thomas Scott. Attempts have been made on insulated detached passages to make this writer speak in favour of the doctrines opposed to those we hold. Though there are expressions to be found in his writings which seem to assert that man's inability is not natural, but moral,—that faith is the belief of the truth, at least that this is its first principle and the like, yet it is manifest that whatever be the extent of meaning he attaches to these declarations, he uses them in no such sense as amounts to a denial of the immediate subjective work of the Spirit of God on the whole powers and faculties of man, understanding, will, and affections, or to the assertion that faith precedes regeneration as its instrumental cause, or that man's powers and faculties are in a state by which he may, or can, or will believe the testimony of God, until the Spirit of God has given him the ability, the whole powers of a rational moral creature, none of which in the natural man tend towards God.* All this is evident from what he says both

* In ascertaining the opinions of any writer on any controverted subject, there are two plain rules necessary to be attended to.

1st. That we consider the points in debate at the time.

2nd. That we fairly view the whole of the writer's sentiments on the point in hand. As, for instance, where it is argued that his doctrine of natural inability destroys responsibility; and a writer disproves it by denying natural inability in the sense that a man has not the natural powers of understanding and will,—that a man is not a man in other words; but yet maintained that nowhere within the compass of fallen human nature could the understanding and will of man receive the truth of God to any spiritual saving purpose; it would be quite a misrepresentation of his meaning to say he denied altogether the doctrine of man's natural inability.

on the subject of regeneration and on saving faith, as the effect of regeneration. Let these passages suffice for the proof:—

“We allow the expressions ‘born of God,’ or ‘born again,’ to be figurative; but in these the metaphor is significant and proper. A new-born infant is a new creature, brought into the world by Almighty power, endued with life, and certain propensities and capacities. It is a human being, and has all things pertaining to our nature, in a weak and incipient state; but by proper care and sustenance it may grow up to maturity, and the perfection of manhood. In like manner, a divine power produces in the mind of a sinner such a change as renders him a new creature, with new propensities and capacities; but these are only in a feeble and incipient state, and exposed to much opposition and danger, on every side. Provision is made for this ‘new-born babe in the sincere milk of the word,’ and in the salvation of Christ, by means of which, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the regenerate man grows up gradually to maturity. No new faculties are communicated in this change, but a new and heavenly direction is given to those which the Creator had bestowed, but which sin had perverted. The capacity of understanding, believing, loving, rejoicing, &c., previously belonged to the man’s nature; but the capacity of understanding the real glory and excellency of heavenly things, of believing the humbling truths of revelation in an efficacious manner, of loving the holy beauty of the divine character and image, and of rejoicing in God’s favour and service, belong to him as born of the Spirit. Regeneration may therefore be defined as ‘a change wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit in the understanding, will, and affections of a sinner, which is the commencement of a *new kind of life*, and which gives another direction to his judgment, desires, pursuits, and conduct.’ The mind seems to be first prepared by a divine energy (like the removal of a film or other obstruction from the eyes of a blind man), to perceive the real nature and comparative value of the objects around him,—concerning which, through the ignorance and depravity of his fallen nature,

the corrupt maxims of the world, and the artifices of Satan, he had formed a very erroneous judgment. Thus the eyes of his understanding are opened, and the light of divine truth, which is diffused around him, shines into his heart, and gradually rectifies his errors and misapprehensions, (Acts xvi. 14; xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 18.) The will and affections also are influenced in the same manner; and the man is now disposed to fear, hate, and shun what he before delighted in, or regarded as harmless; and to love, choose, desire, and rejoice in those things that before he despised or hated.”*

“When a partial view of divine truth gains the assent of the understanding, without a disposition of heart congenial to the grand scope of Christianity, such professors are formed, as our Lord describes under the similitude of the stony ground, and their fallacious confidence, selfish joy, and temporary faith, while ‘they have no root in themselves, but in the time of temptation fall away,’ are exemplified by facts on every side. The seed, too, sown on thorny ground, represents another very common way, in which a carnal heart ‘holds the truth in unrighteousness,’ by a dead faith, an unwarrantable confidence, and an awful mistake as to the tendency and design of revealed truth; but *an honest and good heart* is the only *good ground* in which the word of the kingdom will so ‘take root, and spring up as to bring forth fruit with patience.’

“It is really surprising that, with such Scriptures before them, serious and reflecting persons should speak of faith in Christ as ‘a mere act of the understanding, produced by a common illumination, totally distinct from regeneration!’ I would ask those who use such language whether this be not precisely the definition of a *dead* faith? and whether any man be capable of giving a better? For is it not an assent of the understanding to the doctrines of the gospel as *true*, without any consent of the heart to them as *good and holy*? It is by no means intended that all who inadvertently seem to favour this sentiment, really countenance a dead faith; for many parts of their writings have a contrary tendency: but it shows

* Scott’s Essay on Regeneration.

how readily even *good men*, when contending for a system, may be seduced to sanction opinions which entirely suit the purposes of very *bad men*.

“He that is *dead in sin* can only have a *dead faith*, and perform *dead works*; for *living faith* can only be predicted of a *living subject*. How then can the dead faith of an unregenerate sinner be the instrumental cause of divine life? But it may be readily understood, that, when the word of truth appears with convincing evidence to the natural understanding, and with alarming energy to the conscience, one man may be left under the power of carnal enmity to resist the light, or to flee from it; while the heart of another, under the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, may be subdued, softened, humbled, and disposed to receive the truth in faith and love. Men who are dead in sin may acquire much doctrinal knowledge; and have a natural conviction that the gospel is true, though their whole religion be a notion and form, with a few transient emotions and affections; but, sometimes even while at a distance from instruction, when in urgent danger, or deep afflictions, ‘the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus’ takes possession of their souls. Then the truths before coldly assented to, are recollected and believed in a more cordial manner, and living faith begins to produce all its genuine effects. This change of heart, I apprehend, is called in Scripture being *born again, born of the Spirit, born of God, begotten of God*; it is *regeneration*, the beginning of sanctification; and the *life* thus communicated is not merely light in the understanding, but spiritual perception and sensibility in the judgment and conscience, submission in the will, and holy love in the affections, though in a small and feeble measure. ‘As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.’

“Now it is evident, beyond dispute, that in the judgment of the apostle, as here stated, the first effect of the Lord’s special love to those who are dead in sin, and slaves to divers lusts, consists in quickening and regenerating them; and they are *regenerated* that they may be justified, by being capable of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. In like manner, when the gospel was preached at Antioch,

‘the hand of the Lord was with them,’ (both the teachers and their auditories) ‘and a great number believed and turned to the Lord,’ Acts xi. 21. By the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, the dead in sin were made alive to God; and, in consequence, they believed and turned to the Lord as his worshippers and servants. Here the distinction between *regeneration* and *conversion*, though often treated as scholastic and subtile, ought to be noticed. We are *passive* in receiving divine life, though it may be communicated while we are using the appointed means, or bestowing much diligence from natural principles; but we are *active* in turning to the Lord by true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.”*

“Hitherto we have considered the love of God the Father in sending his only Son into the world, and the love of God the Son in giving himself for our redemption; but the love of God the Holy Ghost must also be manifested and glorified in this great work. This, then, is his work of condescending, compassionate, and generous love, to apply to our poor, guilty, polluted souls, what the Son of God purchased on the cross,—to pour new light into our darkened understandings, to implant a new capacity of perceiving and delighting in spiritual excellency; to remove those hindrances which Satan, by means of our pride, prejudices, and love of the world, had thrown in the way; and thus to enable us to see things as they really are, or as God sees them; to judge of them as he judges; and thus to influence our wills to choose the good and refuse the evil; and so to give an entire new direction to our affections, and, consequently, to our conduct.”†

* Scott’s Essay on Saving Faith, the Effect of Regeneration.

† Letters and Papers of the Rev. Thomas Scott, pp. 361, 362.

CHAP. VI.

MAN'S INABILITY VIEWED IN RELATION TO SAVING FAITH.

HAVING thus, we think, satisfactorily established these several points, viz., that man is a helpless sinner, guilty and ignorant;—enmity to God; that God is sovereign in dealing with him; that all men being alike dead in sin and heirs of condemnation, if any are saved it must be the result of the election of God; that salvation, to have efficacy or comfort to the sinner, must be designed, definite, and complete and certain in all its parts to its objects, and wrought by another independently of them; that to interest such a creature in such a salvation must require the application of a divine power, must be the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Bible declares;—it follows that the connecting link with the salvation divinely wrought and treasured in a divine person, that which establishes a relation between a divine Saviour and a person spiritually and morally severed from God the Saviour, must itself be spiritual and moral, must be such as is implied in resting, reposing on him. That which establishes this relation is universally admitted to be faith. Faith, then, as it is efficacious or saving, must be of this nature. If the saved have any conscious relation to a Saviour, to the deliverer as revealed as able and willing to save, it must be in reliance, casting their care, their burden on the Lord. In any ordinary deliverance proposed and offered, this would be the essential nature of the disposition clos-

ing with it; we cannot imagine it any thing else.* There may be many elements that go to this result, but this is the faith by which a sinner is saved, by which he receives all divine blessings, from Christ on whom he reposes, and with whom by faith he is united. There may be many modifications of faith, according to the object for which it is exercised; but the ultimate foundation of them all is confidence in God, reliance on God as the God of salvation, as a God in Christ. There may be many acts of the soul, both intellectual and moral, called forth by the Spirit of God, but they all issue in this reliance for the good promised and desired. Such a disposition cannot exist in the soul at enmity with God, depraved in its whole powers, understanding, will, and affections, dead in trespasses and sins, without the direct immediate renewal of the Spirit of God. We have already seen, accordingly, that faith is the effect, not the cause of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; that the Holy Spirit is the immediate agent, by a direct act of Almighty power, of all spiritual holy acts or dispositions towards God, or tending to salvation in the soul of man.

Agreeably to these views the Westminster Confession of Faith, which we quote neither as proof nor as authority, but as a guide, has the following statements on the subject:—

“The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word; by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased

* It is not denied that the alienation of the soul from God is moral in its nature. The opposite of this alienation must also be moral in its nature, and can be no other than confidence in God. It cannot be a mere act of the intellect.

and strengthened. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.”*

The objects for which faith is exercised by the believer are very various, though the primary exercise of faith must have a reference to the salvation of the soul, to “justification, sanctification, and eternal life.” We cannot conceive any true faith exercised towards God for any thing else, until this primary object be accomplished, till there has been a reconciliation between the soul and God, till its enmity has been destroyed, till it has enjoyed pardon, justification, sanctification, and eternal life. This is the grand primary object for which it is exercised. With such an object as its end, and such a one for the Saviour as the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people, proposed and offered to the soul, what other disposition can be exercised suitably to Him offered for such an end, than accepting, receiving, relying, resting upon him? Taking this, viz., salvation as included in these three, justification, sanctification, and eternal life, as the object in hand, the object about which the believing soul is immediately and anxiously engaged, what can be the connecting link, what can be that act on the believer’s part, which puts in possession of salvation, in other words, which unites to Christ, but a laying hold of him who is the

* Confession of Faith, chap. iv. sec. i. ii.

Saviour, in whom is salvation ; in apprehending him with a confiding heart, embracing him with all the rational, moral powers and affections of the soul ? "To whom can we go but unto thee ?" This is the real saving act of faith. In this sense, this is its essence. We do not say that there are not, but rather that there are, *many* things essential to it ; but this we affirm is the essence of it ; meaning by essence of it, that which is mainly instrumental in securing the end. The essence of a composite thing is not just the same as what is essential to it. The various elements all harmoniously combining to its completion may be essential to it ; but yet of no one of them could it be said, it was the essence of it. The act of saving faith is a simple enough act. But the elements on which it is founded, or out of which it proceeds, are various. The act of reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ, though a simple act, has a complex reference to the state of man depraved in all his faculties, understanding, will, and affections. Were it the work of man in the soul, we could not understand how with such a reference it could be a simple act, or how it could exist in the soul of a depraved sinner at all ; but it is the work of the Spirit of God. That glorious agent can by one act of manifold application to the understanding, will, and affections, instantaneously do that in all the parts of the soul, which we must painfully endeavour to analyze and describe according to the order of our apprehension. There may, or there must be, the ministry of the word, the presentation of the truth, the intellectual apprehension of it, by the rational soul, the "knowledge of the Holy," in all the revelations of himself, and especially in all the revelations of God in Christ, as the God of salvation ; but until that One

and the same Spirit who worketh all these severally as he will, hath so wrought in the soul as to gain it to confide in him, not one of all these revelations can it savingly receive. I cannot receive the testimony of a man, merely on his testimony; before I receive it I must have somehow confidence in him: much less can the heart at enmity with God, opposed to the whole character of God, receive his testimony respecting the whole of that character, until the enmity is supplanted by confidence in God; so that confidence in God is the very basis of the reception of his testimony. Such a disposition must be the fruit and work of the Spirit of God. It is one thing to know that a man has said this or that. It is another thing to believe that he has said it, and still more to believe what he hath said; confidence in him will alone make me believe it. So it is one thing to know that such and such things have been said in the scriptures of truth. It is another thing to believe it on the authority of him who speaks. Such a belief resting on the character of God can exist only in a heart turned to God, renewed by the Holy Ghost.* It is of no use to tell me I must know God before I can trust him. Perfectly true, but I may know all he says, and yet not trust him. This is undenied and undeniable. What

* If it be a mere understanding of propositions, why on the principles of those who say so, is the announcement that "God so loved the world, and gave his only begotten Son for us, that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life," not believed so soon as heard? Why do those who maintain this seek to persuade men to receive it? All they should do is to announce and explain; persuasion on their part is out of place. Not so on the doctrine we maintain; because when a man says I cannot, we say the Spirit of God can.

then is to produce this trust? Knowledge? No. This is contrary to the fact; to the admission, and is absurd. It will not make me love God. On the contrary, the carnal mind is enmity against God, against God in all his characters as truly existing and revealed in relation to the sinner. There is no one part of his character but is opposed to some one desire, disposition, habit, or characteristic of the sinner's heart. What then is to remove this state of things, so as to induce a belief in the testimony of God? Plainly such a renewing operation of the Spirit of God as gives it confidence in him. This then lies at the foundation of faith, is of its nature and essence, whether you define faith to be the "belief of the truth" of God, or resting and relying upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel, by the eternal appointment and free offer of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

This is the only faith that is suitable to the effects ascribed to faith in the word of God. They are such as could not be produced by the reception or belief of any propositions, or number of propositions whatsoever. They imply a reliance upon and connection with a living, personal, divine Saviour. It may be alleged that before we can rely on a personal Saviour, we must know and believe something of this Saviour; and that faith after all resolves itself into the belief of the truth, or of a testimony. To this we have already in substance replied. If we trace this belief of a testimony to its source, it must rest in our confidence in the testifier. This is in reality the foundation and essence of true faith. Nothing but this reliance upon God, this embracing by faith which is the work of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of

his indwelling in the soul, could call forth the affections of a human soul, give it life, enjoyment, comfort. We repeat, no reception of any number of abstract truths, whether as facts, or as doctrines, could ever accomplish the effects attributed to faith in the word of God, or connect the soul with them in actual possession or enjoyment. To receive the sayings of God requires a heart already confiding in him, and fitted and disposed to do so by that "preparation of the heart in man that cometh from the Lord," and maketh it a fit receptacle for the incorruptible seed of the word of God. To have true genuine confidence and trust in God is the fruit of the sovereign grace of God by the Holy Ghost. Trusting God I receive his word; receiving his word I rely upon him for what I need and he promises and offers to my soul; relying upon him I receive from him the blessing promised; if the object for which I trust be salvation in Christ Jesus, relying upon Christ, held forth as a Saviour, I receive the blessing, even life evermore.

Such is the faith which will alone account for all that is said of faith, and for all that is ascribed to it in the word of God. Let us look, for instance, to these as summed up in the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. The objects for which the faith of these ancient worthies was exercised were very various. Some of them have respect to facts already past;—some to facts yet future;—some to things simply as facts regarding the works of God the Creator, the belief of them resting on the authority of God; because God said so, and founded in the confidence that the soul hath in God who cannot lie;—some to facts demanding an immediate course of conduct on the part of the believer;—some to effects of the most wonderful kind,

taking place not within, but altogether without the believer, and beyond his control and influence; particularly these, ver. 29—35, “By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

These effects, dividing the Red sea, the falling of the walls of Jericho, the mighty deeds of those who subdued kingdoms, the dead raised to life, and the like, were the doings of Jehovah, the Saviour; and the faith of these worthies was an act of reliance on God who promised and performed.

The belief of a promise is a non-entity irrespective of confidence in the promiser. Divine faith which is exercised regarding objects which God alone can accomplish, must in all its modifications, and for all the purposes for which it is exercised, be essentially and fundamentally reliance on the divine agent; and in the great plan of redemption, must be reliance on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to

the part ascribed in the economy of redemption to the glorious Persons of the blessed Trinity. This principle will most satisfactorily account for all the modifications under which faith is presented in the scriptures, and according to the end for which it is exercised. It presupposes a guilty, helpless, and miserable sinner on the one hand, and a gracious almighty Saviour on the other; and itself is the reliance exercised upon this Saviour, even as a building rests on the foundation, the members depend on the head; and through which union and dependence the believer is complete in him who is the head of all principality and power; and this reliance is as secure, and this union as real, according to its spiritual nature, though not so obvious to sense as that of the building on the rock; and is immovable, being founded on the Rock of ages. This is a faith adequate to all that is charged upon it, because the burden is all charged on God. This is the faith that makes our hearts sing for joy; the faith which neither men nor devils can conquer; the faith that overcometh the world, death, and hell; the faith through which we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; the faith which says, "My soul doth magnify the Lord; my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour; for he that is mighty hath done great things for us, holy and reverend is his name." He who feels that he hath this faith in him, feels that the universe cannot prevail against him; so Paul triumphantly exclaimed, Rom. viii. 31—39, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" &c.

Well might Paul therefore, as the highest proof of his affectionate regard for his spiritual children, say, 2 Thess. i. 11, "Wherefore also we pray always for

you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is the faith which receives the word of God, *as* the word of God, and *because* it is the word of God. When I, as a believer, open the word of God, it is not to learn if it be the word of God; "but to hear what God the Lord will speak;" and I listen to all that He says, and bow with reverence, fear, love, submission, hope, joy, as the message may be. I must be convinced, in some way, that it is the word of God. There are various ways by which the Scriptures evidence themselves to be his word, and commend themselves as divine, even to the natural reason,—just as the works of God commend themselves to natural reason as *his* works. But their authority, for any saving purpose or spiritual end, rests on the authority of God their author. To feel it, then, must require the exercise of the same power on my spiritual nature that exalts God to supremacy in my heart and conscience,—in other words, to be real, it must be the work of the Holy Spirit. Why else does Paul render thanks to God on behalf of the Thessalonians for this very faith unless it were *his* work? "For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also," not in order to your believing, but "in you that believe;" believe through that faith which is of "the operation of God." It is not then a

mere assent of the understanding only, but plainly such an assent as implies the reverence and submission of the whole soul, understanding, will, conscience, to God. The apostle, therefore, to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.) abasing himself, and every thing of personal advantage, as commending the truth of God, says, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

It follows, then, from the ground on which faith rests, that man, in his natural state, cannot exercise it, more than a man in his natural state can own, obey, love, and serve God. The ability to exercise faith is most expressly denied to unrenewed men in the word of God. It is denied as matter of fact, and it is denied as matter of possibility, 1 Cor. ii. 14, "'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'" 2 Thess. iii. 2, "All men have not faith." John viii. 47, "Ye therefore hear not God's words, because ye are not of God." Saving faith, or the faith relating to spiritual eternal things, in all its parts, "is the gift of God."

Moreover, it is only such a principle that is a medium of salvation suited to the condition of man, in all his helpless destitution; because it directly lays hold on, and cleaves to a divine Saviour, in whom all fulness dwells,—dwells not merely abstractly, but as the Head, Representative, and Surety of his people. Nothing else is suited to the necessities of a sinner, "dead in trespasses and sins."

How far it is possible for any one to believe the Scriptures to be a divine revelation, who yet have not saving faith, we do not stay to inquire. It is about this latter we are concerned; not about faith or belief in the abstract, but about faith as the mean of salvation in all the extent of that word, in compliance with our duty to the glory of God. In regard to faith's receiving the Scriptures as the word of God, we readily assent to the following statement:—

“We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.’* ”

On this subject we beg also to quote the following passage from Halyburton on the Reason of Faith:—

“Prop. ix.—When therefore it is enquired wherefore do ye believe, and by faith rest in the Scriptures as the word of God, and not of man? we do not answer, It is because God has given us an ability so to do; because the Church says, It is the word of God; because there are many strong moral arguments proving it so; because they who wrote it, wrought miracles; because God has by some voice whispered in our ear, or secretly suggested it to us, That is the word of God; or because there are particular Scriptures which bear witness to all the rest, that they are of God: or, finally, because the matter therein revealed, seems worthy of God to our reason.

“This is the sum of what has been hitherto cleared; and

* Confession of Faith, chap. i. sect. v.

the reasons offered conclude against all these, whether we take them separately or conjunctly. They prove that not one of them, nor all taken together, are the formal reason whereon we are obliged to believe the word of God, or receive it with faith supernatural and divine. The formal reason or ground whereon I assent to, or receive the whole Scriptures, and every particular truth in them, and am obliged in duty so to do, is the authority and truth of God speaking in them, and speaking every truth they contain, evincing itself to my faith, when duly exercised about them, and attending to them, by their own divine and distinguishing light and power. Or when it is inquired, Wherefore do ye believe, receive, assent to, and rest in the Scriptures as indeed the word of God, and not of man? I answer, I do believe them, because they carry in them, to my faith, an evidence of God, or do evidence themselves by their own light and power to my faith, duly exercised about them, that they are the word of God, and not of man."

There may be all this light and self-evidencing power in the word, but there must be a capacity for beholding it. As the admirable writer now quoted expresses it, "*Light*, however clear, cannot of itself supply the defect of the *discerning power*. The sun, though it shines, cannot make the blind to see. The word has this light in it, though the blind see it not." When the Spirit of God gives the discerning faculty, it at once perceives the light and power of divine authority.

Owen, in his work on the same subject, and speaking of divine infallible faith, not infallible in the sense of an inherent quality in the subject, but a divine faith in a divine revelation, which, being infallible, renders the faith that rests on it infallible also, says: "The authority and veracity of God revealing the material objects of our faith, or what it is our duty to believe, is the formal object and reason of our

faith, from whence it ariseth, and whereinto it is ultimately resolved. That is; the only reason why we do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that God is one single essence subsisting in three persons, is because ‘that God who is truth, the God of truth,’ (Deut. xxxii. 4.) who ‘cannot lie,’ (Tit. 1. 2.) and whose ‘word is truth,’ (1 John v. 6.) hath revealed these things to be so; and our believing these things on that ground renders our faith divine and supernatural: supposing also a respect unto the subjective efficiency of the Holy Ghost, inspiring it into our minds, whereof afterwards. For to speak distinctly, our faith is supernatural with respect unto the production of it into our minds by the Holy Ghost; and infallible, with respect unto the formal reason of it, which is divine revelation; and is divine, in opposition to what is merely human on both accounts.”

And again, “We do also here suppose the internal effectual work of the Spirit begetting faith in us as was before declared, without which we can believe neither the Scripture nor any thing else with faith divine, not for want of evidence in them, but of faith in ourselves.

“Those things being supposed, we do affirm that it is the authority and truth of God, as manifesting themselves in the supernatural revelation made in the Scripture, that our faith ariseth from, and is resolved into. And herein consists that testimony which the Spirit gives unto the word of God that it is so; for it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. The Holy Ghost being the immediate author of the whole Scripture, doth therein, and thereby, give testimony unto the divine truth

and original of it, by the characters of divine authority and veracity impressed on it, and evidencing themselves in its power and efficacy.

“And let it be observed, that what we assert respects the revelation itself, the Scripture, the writing; and not merely the things written or contained in it. The arguments produced by some to prove the truth of the doctrines of Scripture reach not the cause in hand. For our inquiry is not about believing the truth revealed, but about believing the revelation itself—the Scripture itself to be divine. And this we do only because of the authority and veracity of the revealer, that is, of God himself, manifesting themselves therein.”*

The question, How we come to believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, is not identical with the question, On what does our faith in the word of God rest? The ways by which we come, under the operations of the Spirit of God, to the saving spiritual conviction that the Scriptures are the word of God, may be various; but that conviction being reached, it is manifest that the formal ground of our faith in their authority in all and each of the things revealed therein, is God himself speaking in the word. So that the ultimate ground of faith, or rather faith itself, is a reliance upon a divine Person for the object for which the faith is exercised.

Saving faith then, such a faith as can meet the case of a sinner, such as we have proved man to be, is most justly defined, in few words, to be “a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.” “He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness,

* Owen on the Reason of Faith.

sanctification, and redemption." Am I ignorant? He is my prophet; am I guilty? He is Jehovah my righteousness; am I polluted? He is the blood of sprinkling; am I lost? He is my Redeemer; and in each of these characters I rest and rely upon Him.

We do not affirm, and it would argue a very defective acquaintance with the word of God to assert, that this definition is descriptive of all the uses of the word faith in Scripture. But what we maintain is, that the faith which is of the operation of God in the soul, for all the purposes for which it is exercised, has, as its foundation, reliance on a divine Person. These purposes may be very various, as they undoubtedly are; but the faith that realizes them has its ultimate foundation in the reliance of the soul on God, on a divine Person, the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. This faith may have reference to a doctrine, a precept, a promise, or a threatening, or a work of God, to the whole revealed truth of God, or to some particular truth; but the ultimate ground of it is reliance on the divine Person, revealing, commanding, promising, threatening.

It is impossible, in a work of this nature, to give a full Scriptural illustration of this idea. Those who will carry this notion in their minds, and peruse the "Miscellaneous Remarks Concerning Faith," by President Edwards, will, we are persuaded, find how amply it is made out, by a simple deduction of miscellaneous Scripture testimonies on the subject. And while we are persuaded they will see strong evidence in support of the truth of the position we are maintaining, they will learn at the same time the danger of attempting to maintain that faith, in all its exercises and for all its ends, is only one simple notion;

though one simple notion must be its formal ground or ultimate foundation.* We can only give a few specimens and Scripture references, entreating that the reader will either have recourse to Edwards, and peruse his whole chapter; or at least take the trouble to turn up his Bible and read the passages referred to in the specimens we produce:—

1. Faith is a belief of a testimony, 2 Thess. i. 10; it is an assent to truth, as appears by the eleventh of the Hebrews; and it is saving faith that is there spoken of, as appears by the last verses of the foregoing chapter, “And these all having received a good report,” &c.; Mark i. 15; John xx. 31; 2 Thess. ii. 13. 2. It is the proper act of the soul towards God as faithful, Rom. iii. 3, 4. 3. It is a belief of truth from a sense of glory and excellency, or at least with such a sense, John xx. 29; Matt. ix. 21; 1 Cor. xxii. 3. 4. It is a belief of the truth from a spiritual taste of what is excellent and divine, Luke xii. 57; believers receive the truth in the love of it, and speak the truth in love, Eph. iv. 15. 5. The object of faith is the gospel as well as Jesus Christ, Mark i. 15; John xvii. 8; Rom. x. 16, 17. 6. Faith includes a knowledge of God and Christ, 2 Pet. i. 23; John xvii. 3. 7. A belief in promises is faith, or a great part of faith, Heb. xi. 1; 2 Chron. xx. 20; a dependence on promises is an act of faith, Gal. v. 5. 8. Faith is receiving Christ into the heart, Rom. x. 6—10. 9. A true faith includes more than a mere belief; it is accepting the gospel, and includes all acceptance, 1 Tim. i. 14, 15; 2 Cor. xi. 4. 10. It is something more than merely the assent of the understanding, because it is called obeying the gospel, Rom.

* See, on this subject, Owen on Justification.

x. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 17; it is obeying the doctrine from the heart, Rom. vi. 17, 18. 11. This expression of obeying the gospel, seems to denote the heart's yielding to the gospel in what it proposes to us in its calls; it is something more than what may be called a believing the truth of the gospel, John xii. 42. And Philip asked the eunuch whether he believed with all his heart? It is a fully believing, or a being fully persuaded; this passage evidences that it is so at least. 12. *There are different sorts of faith that are not true and saving*, as is evident by what the apostle James says, "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works," where it is supposed there may be faith without works, which is not the right faith. Thus, 13. It is a trusting in Christ, Ps. ii. 12; Eph. i. 12, 13; 2 Tim. v. 12. Many places in the Old Testament speak of trusting in God as the condition of his favour and salvation, especially Ps. lxxviii. 21, 22. It implies submission, Rom. xv. 12; 1 Tim. iv. 10; 2 Tim. i. 12; Matt. viii. 26; Matt. xvi. 8; 1 John v. 13, 14. Believing in Christ in the 13th verse, is called confidence in the 14th. 14. It is a committing ourselves to Christ, 2 Tim. i. 12. This is a scripture sense of the word believe, as is evident by John ii. 24, "Jesus did not commit himself to them." In the original it is *οὐκ ἐπίστευεν ἑαυτὸν αὐτοῖς*.

The miscellaneous observations of President Edwards, it is well known, were written down by him as they happened to occur in the course of his reading or meditating on any subject. They are not therefore in the order of a treatise; but rather as an induction of particulars from which general conclusions may be drawn. Those on faith are exceedingly

valuable in this respect; and fully justify our preceding statements, the result of our own reflections. This induction is drawn out to a very considerable extent, and we cannot help quoting some additional specimens before drawing the general conclusions they suggest. Among other things he says, "19. There is contained in the nature of faith a sense of our own unworthiness." Many proofs are given. Again, "21. Love either is what faith arises from, or is included in faith, by John iii. 18, 19; 2 Thess. ii. 10, 12. 22. The being athirst for the waters of life is faith, Rev. xxi. 6. It is a true cordial seeking of salvation by Christ." Again,

"Sect. 25. The adhering to the truth, and acquiescing in it with the judgment, is from a sense of the glory of the revealer, and the sufficiency and excellency of the performer of the facts. The adhering to it, and acquiescing in it with the inclination and affection, is from the goodness and excellency of the thing revealed, and of the performer. If a person be pursued by an enemy, and commit himself to a king or a captain, to defend him, it implies his quitting other endeavours, and applying to him for defence, and putting himself under him, and hoping that he will defend him. If we consider it as a mere act of the mind, a transaction between spiritual beings, considered as abstracted from any external action, then it is the mind's quitting all other endeavours, and seeking and applying itself to the Saviour for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and delivering itself to him, or a being willing to be his, with a hope that he will save him. Therefore, for a person to commit himself to Christ as a Saviour, is quitting all other endeavours and hopes, and heartily applying himself to Christ for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and acquiescing in his way of salvation, and a hearty consent of the soul to be his entirely, hoping in his sufficiency and willingness to save."

It is very manifest then that the doctrine con-

cerning saving faith, or the faith efficacious to spiritual effects, we have previously laid down, is the doctrine of Edwards, drawn from a very large induction of scripture particulars, viz. that whatever may be its modifications, and these are very various, according to the ends for which it is exercised, the fundamental principle of it is confidence in Him who is able and willing. No other faith can save, purify, comfort the lost, polluted, miserable, and helpless, but such as reposes on a deliverer able and willing. Edwards, after pursuing his induction in many other particulars, says, "Why is this reception or union of the soul properly expressed by faith? *Answer.* Not so much merely from the nature of the act, more abstractly considered, which is union, reception, or closing: but from the nature of the act, conjunctly with the state of the agent, and the object of the act; which qualifies and specifies the act, and adds certain qualifications to the abstract idea of union, closing, or reception. Consider the state of the receiver, guilty, miserable, undone, impotent, helpless, unworthy; and the nature and worth of the received, he being a divine, invisible Saviour: the end for which he is received, the benefits invisible, the ground on which he is received, the word of God, and his invitations and promises: the circumstances of those things that are received, supernatural, incomprehensible, wonderful, difficult, unsearchable; the proper act of union or reception in such a case, is most aptly expressed by the word *faith*. Fearfulness is opposite to faith, Mark iv. 40, 'Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?' and Rev. xxi. 8, 'But the fearful and unbelieving.' Justifying faith is sometimes called hope in scripture."

In sect. 46. Edwards goes on to show that there was obedience in the condition of both covenants; in sect. 47. that it implies a cleaving to Christ; in sect. 48. Faith is not all kinds of assent to the word of God as true and divine; in sect. 49. That it is a taking hold of God's strength; and in sect. 50. he says, "That there are different sorts of faith, and that all believing that Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, &c., is not true and saving faith, or that faith which most commonly has the name of faith appropriated in the New Testament, is exceedingly evident by John vi. 64, 'But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.'"

In confirmation and illustration of these views we beg to quote the following sections:—

"54. It is fit that, seeing we depend so entirely and universally, visibly, and remarkably, on God, in our fallen state, for happiness, and seeing the special design of God was to bring us into such a great and most evident dependence; that the act of the soul, by which it is interested in this benefit, bestowed in this way, should correspond; viz., a looking and seeking to, and depending on God for it; that the union of heart, that is the proper term, should imply such an application of the soul to God, and seeking his benefits only and entirely, and with full sense of dependence on him, that as the condition before was obedience, or rendering to God, so now it should be seeking and looking to him, drawing and deriving from him, and with the whole heart depending on him, on his power and free grace, &c. Faith is the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel. But the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel, is the soul's active agreeing, and suiting or adapting itself, in its act, to the exhibition God

gives us of Christ and his redemption ; to the nature of the exhibition, being pure revelation, and a revelation of things perfectly above our senses and reason ; and to Christ himself in his person as revealed, and in the character under which he is revealed to us ; and to our state with regard to him in that character ; and to our need of him, and concern with him, and his relation to us, and to the benefits to us, with which he is exhibited and offered to us in that revelation ; and to the great design of God in that method and divine contrivance of salvation revealed. But the most proper name for such an action, union, or union of the soul to Christ, as this, of any that language affords, is *faith*.

“ 55. The revelation or exhibition that God first made of himself, was of his authority, demanding and requiring of us, that we should render something to him that nature and reason required. The act of the soul that is suitable to such an exhibition, may be expressed by submitting, doing, obeying, and rendering to God. The exhibition which God makes of himself, since our fall, in the gospel, is not of his power and authority, as demanding of us, but of his sufficiency for us, as needing, empty, helpless ; and of his grace and mercy to us, as unworthy and miserable. And the exhibition is by pure revelation of things quite above all our senses and reason, or the reach of any created faculties, being of the mere good pleasure of God. The act in us, that is proper and suitable to, and well according to, such an exhibition as this, may be expressed by such names as believing, seeking, looking, depending, acquiescing, or in one word, *faith*.”

These views he supports largely by scripture proofs. He demonstrates that there is a difference between saving faith and common faith, in the very native essence of it. He observes that though orthodox divines may differ in their modes of expression, yet in their definitions they usually come to the same thing, and adds, “ Their distinctions generally signify as much as *a person receiving Christ and his salvation as revealed in the gospel, with his whole soul ; ac-*

quiescing in what is exhibited as true, excellent, and sufficient for him, &c." He then solemnly warns against receiving "any such doctrine, as that there is no essential difference between common and saving faith; and that both consist in a mere assent of the understanding to the doctrines of religion." He enlarges on the importance of right views of faith in Christ as the grand mean of salvation, calls any thing else than that we have described it, to be another gospel, and concludes thus; "Therefore he that teaches another faith instead of this, teaches another religion. Such doctrine as I have opposed, must be destructive and damning, *i. e.*, directly tending to man's damnation; leading such as embrace it, to rest on something essentially different from the grand condition of salvation. And therefore I would advise you, as you would have any regard to your own soul's salvation, and to the salvation of your posterity, to beware of such doctrine as this."

This is the universally received doctrine of the Reformed Churches, as contained in their original standards. As this work however has extended greatly beyond what was originally intended, we must forbear adducing the actual proofs. From the view of faith which we have given, it is plain,—

1st. That it must be the work of the Holy Spirit, as the scripture abundantly declares. It implies the harmony and acquiescence of the soul in God, in his perfections, in his love and grace, and in his whole character and dealings with the children of men in the great plan of redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ, a state of the soul which nothing but the almighty power and grace of the Holy Spirit can

give to a soul by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and at enmity with God.

2nd. That it is essentially spiritual and moral in its nature ; and is an act of the whole soul, understanding, will, and affections.

3rd. That it is fitted to accomplish all that is ascribed to it in the word of God, and all that the believing sinner can need, because it immediately reposes on, and unites to, a divine Redeemer.

4th. It has a reference to all the truth of God in Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit, because such a God is its object and the ground of its confidence.

5th. It saves the believer from the necessity and presumption of determining what truths are fundamental, and what not, or selecting any one proposition of the Word of God, as the ground or warrant of faith. But it lays hold of the whole testimony of God, because the Holy Spirit has conformed it to God himself.

6th. But nevertheless the receiving of any one proposition of divine truth in sincerity, is a characteristic of a true believer. Such as, "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God shall be saved," or, "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God ; for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost "

We have not thought it necessary to enter into any critical examination of the meaning of the word faith, or believing as used in scripture. We rather choose to rest our observations on the broad principles of the Word of God, viewed in connection with the natural condition of man as a sinner. We have the strongest confidence, that such an examination would amply bear out our views.

To those who wish to see this part of the subject, with many of the views we have advocated, well stated, and ably discussed, we venture to recommend a small work by the Rev. James Carlile of Dublin, entitled, "The Old Doctrine of Faith asserted in opposition to certain Modern Innovations," London, 1823.

CHAPTER VII.

MAN'S INABILITY IN RELATION TO RESPONSIBILITY.

THIS is a subject of deep and of vast importance. On no subject of religious truth or speculation do we believe more serious or widely diffused error to prevail than on this. It may be difficult to determine, to the satisfaction of all, what are the only fundamental principles of religion or sources of error; but there can be no manner of doubt that this is one subject that is in its nature fundamental. Before considering its relation to the condition of a man as a sinner, we deem it of no secondary importance to endeavour to establish the doctrine of human responsibility for belief, in all its legitimate aspects, on some stable foundation. The writer was called some years ago to discuss this topic in one of a course of lectures then delivered in this city; and he humbly apprehends the subject was then placed on its true basis; and having less time and opportunity to enter on a full examination of it now, than he had then; he ventures to this extent to avail himself of what he then wrote.

ARE MEN MORALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR BELIEF?

We affirm they are.

We feel, in the outset, that we have one serious difficulty to contend with, namely, that of finding the opponent in plain palpable shape, or individual personality. The doctrine, that man is not responsible

for—that he is supreme master of, his own faith—final judge and jury in the case—that he himself is helpless or passive in the matter—that he is under a necessity of nature to believe, not merely according to the strength of evidence, which properly understood is true, but according to his own capacity, just as we find him, for receiving it—that this necessity absolves him from guilt, whatever may be the belief he forms—and that he is not only irresponsible to man, but acquitted in the sight of God—this doctrine, we say, is widely prevalent and widely destructive. But it is like the pestilence that wasteth at noon-day—like the Italian *Mal' aria*, desolating the fairest and richest regions, making havoc in the human constitution, all-pervading and terrible, and yet impalpable and imperceptible. Yet every reader of our daily press—of our periodicals and journals, from the large review to the penny magazine—of our political or religious controversies—knows that this doctrine is widely diffused; and with all the confidence of a self-evident maxim, or at least a truth conceded by all but unthinking and narrow-minded bigots. It is seldom presented in the naked shape of an affirmation, that we are not responsible to God for our belief; so that, in conversing with an ingenious friend, on this subject, he affirmed that no man maintained it—that all admit that if God hath spoken, man must believe. Then, was my answer, I see not the use of discussing this point. It belongs to us only to establish the fact that God hath spoken, and the work is done. It is true that, if a man were persuaded that God had spoken to him, we imagine he would admit that he must believe; but the mode in which he gets quit of the obligation of believing that God hath spoken to him

is, not by absolute denial that God hath spoken at all, but by maintaining or supposing that, if he cannot *perceive* that God hath spoken, then he hath not spoken authoritatively to him—making *his perception* the ground and judge of responsibility. But whether I can make it obvious or not, we all feel that, by the prevailing questions and sayings, What is truth? How do you know the truth? It matters not what a man believes so that he be a good man, and the like—men apprehend and practically act upon the conviction, that error is an innocent thing—that it is not dangerous in its consequences, more than criminal in its nature—and is not viewed by the Supreme as implying any moral guilt, and consequently will not be a subject of question at the great day. In fact, this is most clearly and expressly implied in the opinions of the infidel philosophers, both on religion and morality—that, for instance, all religions are alike, as Chubb maintained—that God does not concern himself with the affairs of men at all—that conscience is a mere artificial accident in man, as Bolingbroke declared—that man is a mere machine—that moral perfections, and truth among the rest, may be defects in God, as Hume affirmed—and as to morality, Lord Herbert maintained, than sensual or angry passion was no more to be blamed than the thirst occasioned by the dropsy or the drowsiness by lethargy—Hobbes, that every man's judgment was the standard of right and wrong.* Bolingbroke and Hume maintained the in-

* An opinion borrowed from the ancient Pagans.—See Justin Martyr's Apology. It is curious to observe how wonderfully little originality there is in the opinions of infidels, notwithstanding their high pretensions. They are not the offspring of uncommon genius, but of one common depraved nature.

nocence of the most revolting vices—Rousseau, that his own feelings were the standard of right and wrong ; all which notions are utterly subversive of the doctrine that man is morally responsible for his belief.

This doctrine of non-responsibility appears to me to be plainly and positively asserted in the well-known passage of a speech, or Inaugural Address, delivered by Lord (then Mr.) Brougham, in the University of Glasgow, in the dedication of which he says, "*the opinions which it sets forth are the result of mature deliberation.*" In this address there occur the following words—"As men will no longer suffer themselves to be led blindfold in ignorance, so will they no more yield to the vile principle of judging and treating their fellow-creatures, not according to the intrinsic merit of their actions, but according to the accidental and involuntary coincidence of their opinions. The great truth has finally gone forth to all the ends of the earth, THAT MAN SHALL NO MORE RENDER ACCOUNT TO MAN FOR HIS BELIEF, OVER WHICH HE HAS HIMSELF NO CONTROL. Henceforward nothing shall prevail upon us to *praise* or to *blame* any one for that which he can *no more change* than he can the *hue of his skin* or the *height of his stature.*" Pp. 47, 48.

I shall not stay to criticise the oratorical pomp with which this sentiment—held, when stript of the gorgeous drapery of words, by the most vulgar and illiterate, who neither understand what they say nor whereof they affirm—is thus announced, nor scrutinize the alleged extent to which it is said to prevail ; but merely remark, that it is neither a new sentiment, nor is it a surprising thing, that a doctrine so palatable to the atheistic selfishness of man, and so

consonant with the ancient doctrine of fate and the indolence and pride of human nature, should be widely received. It is only a modernized version of a doctrine frequently in dispute in former days in Great Britain, which was maintained by the Socinians, and by them borrowed from Aristotle's *το δοκεν ουκ εφ' ημιν*—to know, or to have an opinion, is not in *our* power—is not of us: and observe that it is not so much in the declaration, that “man shall no longer render account to man for his belief,” that the denial of moral responsibility for our belief is uttered, but in the accompanying reasons, namely, “over which he *himself* has no control;” and still more, that belief or “opinions” are “accidental and involuntary”—not the subjects of “praise or blame,” because a man can “no more change them than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature,” which in fact is only a paraphrase of Aristotle's *το δοκεν ουκ εφ' ημιν*.

It is self-evident that, if a man is involuntary in his belief—has no control over it—can no more change it than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature, which as far as he is concerned are mere accidents, he can neither be responsible for it in the sight of God nor man. So plain is this, that I shall not waste time in showing that it was so understood by the author's admirers.

I have adverted to it not so much to make it the subject of my answer, as to show that man's responsibility to God for his belief is by many denied—that it is affirmed that there is a sense in which, though a man's belief should be wrong—in other words, contrary to truth—that is, as we must understand, if responsible to God mean any thing, contrary to the

mind or will of God—otherwise we do not see how there can be any dispute about the matter at all; just as responsibility in moral conduct implies a right and a wrong in conduct; and denial of responsibility implies that a man will never be called in question, approved or blamed, and consequently will not be punished, though his conduct be contrary to right—and so of belief, though it be contrary to truth—to the will of God. That irresponsibility is claimed for belief to this extent is manifest, from a passage quoted by the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, from a writer in the *Westminster Review*, who says, “Now it is possible, though not very common, for a man to deal faithfully with evidence, doing his utmost to have it fully before him and to guard his mind from bias on either side, and yet to come to the wrong conclusion.” This, observe, is a general proposition, applicable to a question about the truth of God—a matter which he hath revealed and commanded, as well as any thing else. And he goes on to show that the atheist, dealing faithfully with evidence, of course in his own inquiry, whether there be a God, may abide in his atheism, come to the wrong conclusion, and yet have all the merit which the Scripture ascribes to faith—which indeed is none at all—but the author means, it may be the instrument of securing the favour of God and the salvation of his soul.

I have said that it is implied in our previous observations that man is responsible for his belief; that is to say, a subject of approbation or of blame, and a Supreme governor being implied, of reward or punishment. Indeed, as has been very beautifully reasoned by Dr. Chalmers,* an atheist, as he cannot

* Chalmers's Works, vol. i. chap. 2.

by possibility prove that there is no God, but must at the very best only take up the position that there is not adequate proof that there is ; so, on the bare suggestion that a God *may be*, the atheist becomes a subject of responsibility ; namely, to go, as he says, “in quest of that unseen benefactor, who, for aught I know, has ushered me into existence and spread so glorious a panorama around me,” &c. “It is thus that the very conception of a God throws (draws ?) a responsibility after it ; and that duty, solemn and imperative duty, stands associated with the thought of a possible deity, as well as with the sight of a deity, standing in full manifestation before us ;” and on this principle this great man hath clearly demonstrated that all men, however rude or ignorant, are the subjects of responsibility for the mode in which they have followed out their light. It is their duty to seek after God if haply they may find him.

If this simplest of all religious conceptions, the mere imagination of a God, implies, in the view of reason, an obligation to inquire into the evidence, much more, with all the knowledge afforded, both by natural and revealed religion, where the subjects are of such vast importance—the authority by which they claim our regard being that of God, and the consequences involved being infinite in the degree of happiness or misery implied in the reception or rejection, and everlasting in their duration. There can be no apology for those who altogether refuse to give any attention to subjects which reason must admit to be of paramount importance ; and it seems equally plain—and, we think, will be admitted by all—that if men, by any immoral bias of the heart, are prevented, not only from looking at the evidence of

Divine revelation, altogether, but led to regard it partially, unfairly, or with hostile disposition, they are morally guilty and responsible for the consequences.

This being admitted, the usual mode of proving man responsible for his belief, is to narrow the question to his belief of Divine revelation; and then to show from its nature, that in rejecting it, man must have been actuated by prejudices, feelings, and dispositions that are evil—that this unbelief is sinful and blameworthy, and the subject of it responsible for the consequences. This is the method of Dr. Barrow, and has been followed also by Dr. Wardlaw in his two discourses on “Man’s Accountableness for his Belief.”

This method has always appeared to me unsatisfactory; because, until you establish man’s responsibility on some more abstract and positive foundation, you leave him always the resource of deceiving himself by supposing and trying to persuade others, that he is not actuated by any “*evil heart of unbelief*,” and refusing to acknowledge your charge, he escapes, in his own mind, from the responsibility. He will admit the consequence, but denies the premises. This mode of treating the subject, it appears to me, is justly liable to the reply of the Westminster Reviewer, as given in the Appendix to the second edition of Dr. Wardlaw’s two sermons, page seventy-two, “What, then, does the divine proceed to prove? That a man is responsible for his belief? No: but *for a very different thing*; for his *mode of dealing with evidence*.” And though he does convict the reviewer of certain inconsistencies and of much theological ignorance, it does still appear to me, that what the reviewer alleges is really what he hath done.

I intend therefore to follow a different course, and to make some observations, directly and positively to show, that man is responsible for his belief—and that therefore if he comes to a conclusion contrary to the mind of God in a matter where morality is at all implied—in moral truth, the fault is his—and then I shall state and illustrate some of the causes which lead to such a result; and that therefore the Scriptures most justly pronounce unbelief sinful—make faith a commanded duty, and unbelief a sin meriting condemnation.

To prevent mistakes it will be necessary to define what is meant in this question by belief.

By the belief or faith, which in Scripture is said to be the medium of our salvation, I understand, with our Shorter Catechism, the principle or disposition “by which we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel.” But this is not the sense in which, in the general question now in debate, we are to understand it. It will save theological dispute, and we apprehend, be better understood to explain it by the word sentiments or “opinions,” which, in fact, is the word employed by Brougham, which embraces, therefore, not merely the reception of a testimony, and the faith or trust which is the medium of salvation, but all matters about which the mind forms a judgment, or rather all the judgments which the mind forms, either in common matters of fact, in matters of science, or of moral truth. It is as affecting the latter, we are now chiefly concerned; and to make the question in debate more definite still, I think it necessary to remark, that the very terms of it imply that there is not only an object of belief, but an ob-

ject *worthy of belief* presented by God to the mind of a being admitted to be a moral and accountable agent. I am not now called to show what that object is ; but it being admitted that such an object—be it Christianity or some other thing—is thus presented to the mind of man, is there in the peculiar nature of belief that which releases man from the responsibility in regard to it, under which he is laid in regard to moral conduct ? This is implied in the very terms of the question ; and I cannot understand how otherwise there can be any dispute about the matter : because no man in his senses will attempt to show that we are responsible to God for not receiving that which by the supposition is, or may be false. The question is, therefore, about the reception of what is morally true ; if we may innocently reject it, or, which is the same thing, innocently receive in its stead that which is morally false ; and, in short, are in no way responsible in the matter.

With these explanations, demanded by the importance of the subject, I proceed to show, “That man is morally responsible for his belief.”

1st, Because our words and actions necessarily depend on and take their rise from our belief ; in other words, on the views or opinions we entertain and the motives by which we are actuated ; and the following principles are no less philosophical than scriptural—“as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he ;” “the same fountain cannot send forth both sweet water and bitter ;” “no man can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ;” “by their fruits ye shall know them—do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles ?” “out of the heart are the issues of life.”

These are self-evident maxims. It is obvious to common sense, that words being the mere clothing of our thoughts and desires and feelings, they must take the cast and character of the thoughts; that actions being the mere performance of the judgments we form or the execution or gratification of the feelings and desires we entertain, and these again being the result of the views we form of the object of desire or aversion, they must as necessarily take their character and direction from them as a child takes his being from his parent. In every thing we say or do, we speak and act from views and feelings and motives. No being is self-existent but God; and no word or action has this attribute. The most hasty, rash, and senseless words, or most capricious, foolish, wayward, and passionate actions, all spring from certain notions and desires of some supposed good to be attained, or uneasy feeling or evil to be escaped, or urgent desire to be gratified; and the rashness or violence of the word or action is not proof of the want of any view or desire in the matter, but of its strength and intensity at the time. These things are obvious as matters of fact in the human constitution; and I do not require at all to enter on the formidable metaphysical question of liberty and necessity; and it most naturally and necessarily results from them without the necessity of any additional reasoning or illustration, that we must, if responsible for words or actions, be responsible for that from which, by a natural connection, they flow; namely, our views and opinions—in other words, our belief—and therefore we do find,

2nd, That, in the providence of God—in other words, in point of fact—we are made responsible for our belief in the present world.

In other words, we experience the consequences of it in this world. If we come to a wrong determination in a matter of common life, and which may be of the highest importance to us, it will not save us from the evil consequences that we did not believe the statement that would have secured us from harm, or that we even gave, as we suppose, our very best attention to the subject. We might have done so ; but still, if the decision be wrong, the natural bad effects shall certainly follow. Thus, for instance, a man may examine with care a vessel to discover whether it be seaworthy, before he embark in it, and determine that it is ; but if he has committed an error, the natural effects must follow, and the ship and crew sink in the waves just as certainly as though he had deliberately removed a plank from it. This and many other analogies lead to the conclusion, that there is nothing in the nature of belief which will save a man from the consequences of rejecting truth. If any man object that this is unjust, we remind him that it is and must be admitted, even by the deist, that God *is* just. The fact is, as now stated : the infidel objector is as much concerned in the explanation of God's providence as I am ; and we say to him, "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" "He that reproveth God, let him answer it." But, though not necessary for my argument, it may be observed, that this apparent hardship in the dealings of God with his creature is removed, and certainly at least neutralized by the fact, that man is a sinner, that there is therefore a derangement in his constitution and in the relations in which he stands to things around him, by which God makes him liable for the consequences of his errors ; so that, as a matter of fact, we read in Scrip-

ture that the very ground is cursed for his sake—that is, cursed to him—because itself cannot feel the evils of the curse. And, if man is made liable to the consequences of his errors here, why not also at the great day, if he has refused to receive, or even failed to discover, that moral truth which God has presented to his acceptance? No man therefore can wisely or warrantably conclude that, being in error, he is either innocent or safe, or shall not be made responsible for his belief.

3rd. We are, in point of fact, under the providence of God, made responsible for our belief to our fellow-men.

So far am I from conceding with some writers the truth of Brougham's statement, that man is no more accountable to man for his belief than for the hue of his skin or the height of his stature—that I maintain he is, in point of fact, and must, from the nature of the case, be responsible to man, and that it cannot be otherwise; and if this be true, *a fortiori* he is responsible to God.

That it is true may be shown in very few words. But here it is necessary to guard against a fallacy, very apt to mingle with our conceptions on this subject—that the idea of responsibility to man necessarily implies the extremest punishment, or suffering which the party who exacts the responsibility can inflict. This extreme punishment *may* be implied; but it may not, and is not necessarily so. But this being understood, it is matter of fact that we *are* made responsible to our fellow-men for our belief. I as necessarily disapprove of atheism, as of murder,—of the man who seriously maintains that it is lawful to murder, as of the man who does murder, of the man

who like Hume maintained that adultery is no sin, as of the man who is guilty of the crime—nay, he may by his opinion do infinitely greater mischief. But my disapprobation, or to make the thing stronger, the disapprobation of our fellow-men is a punishment, and the holder of the bad opinion is so constituted that he naturally feels it; and if he has by a process of hardening and perversion become insensible to mere disapprobation, his fellow-men not only can, but do, make him responsible, by shunning, it may be, his contagious society, refusing to invest him with certain trusts or powers or privileges; and they must do so; because they know that if his opinions are sincere he will act upon them; and just in proportion to their belief of his sincerity will they take measures of defence or impose hinderances and restraints upon him. So that, reason as he may, of his rights to entertain what opinions he pleases, he is, and must be, in the providence of God, made responsible. But if belief, mere opinions, are not worthy of praise or blame, we have no right even to disapprove; and what then becomes of the influence of public opinion, for which the men, with whom I am chiefly arguing, do strenuously contend, and which they make to bear not merely on actions that they deem wrong, but on the belief, the sentiments that lead to them, and maintain the propriety of stamping them with their detestation and censure? So that, deny it in theory as we may, yet in the very constitution of human beings and of human society, in other words, in the providence of God here, men are made responsible to their fellow-men for their belief.

You have only to carry your ideas a step farther, to see that man is justly responsible to man, even as

the subject of civil government, for his opinions, even though these opinions be what are called religious. For instance, it is at the present day the religious opinion of a tribe of Hindoos called Thugs, and who have under its influence perpetrated a vast number of murders and robberies, at the supposed command of a goddess, who by omens directs them in their atrocious deeds, and receives in return a share in the spoils, that it is a religious duty to murder. A very interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1837, says of them, "The principle of assassination was religion." This is largely proved, and this conclusion drawn by the Reviewer—"It will now, we think, be apparent, in what the principle of Thuggee consists; what it was which gave rise to the phenomenon, of several thousand persons pursuing murder as a trade, generation after generation, not one of whom entertained the least suspicion that he was doing wrong. The Thugs are the followers of a deity who delights in blood." Again, "To the Thugs, therefore, murder is an act of religion, just as much as the practice of charity is to a Christian. When, by according favourable omens, their patroness is supposed to have revealed her will for the sacrifice of travellers, those of the stricter sort dare not disobey." This is not a solitary case: the burning of widows on the funeral pile, the exposing of children, and casting human creatures into the Ganges as sacrifices, are all done under the influence of religious opinion.

Is the government of India, then, not justly entitled not only to seize and punish these men when they have committed murder, but also called upon to put any one who avows that he is of this caste, under surveillance and restraint; that he may neither mur-

der nor seduce others to do so ? Most certainly. So that it is plain that the sentiment, that man is not responsible to man for his belief, must have a limit. In other words, he is responsible. All governments have acted on this principle ; and if they were prevented from doing so, they would be altogether defenceless and could have no security for their very existence. When atheism, blasphemy, the denial of all government, community of property, the destruction of the social relations of life, have been openly proclaimed and asserted, governments have always felt, and ought in common sense and prudence to feel it a duty, for self-preservation, to take cognizance of them. This is done every day in America, where religion is least of all others a concern of the state. All crimes intended, urged, threatened, though not perpetrated, that is to say, while matters of opinion are justly, nay necessarily held subjects of responsibility by the individuals of whom society is composed. I have shown that it must be so ; and the same thing holds true of the society itself. Indeed it seems to me that this right is the only security we can have against persecution itself. If men have a moral right to hold persecuting opinions they have a right to spread them ; and when sufficiently spread, they have both the right and the power to act upon them. How far, and when they are to be interfered with, must be determined by circumstances. I am no more called to define the limit at which responsibility to man shall cease, than the adversary to define the limit when, as in the case of the Thugs, he will allow it to take effect : a limit there must be ; and it is for those who are called to act—for legislators and others—to define the limits.

If it be objected that this principle will often be very difficult of execution, I admit it. But so are the clearest principles and precepts of morality coming in contact with that which is opposed to them. And it is not a sufficient objection to a principle which may be perfect, that it does not operate smoothly among those who are imperfect and sinful. In fact there is and must be a necessary opposition between virtue and vice, truth and falsehood, religion and impiety. Hence it was that our Saviour said, "I come not to send peace on earth but a sword." But who was to blame for the consequences? Not the Saviour nor his religion of truth and love; but man and his hostility to both.

If, then, man is and must be responsible to man for his opinions, (let men call it by what name they may, the fact is undoubted,) then there is no reason to believe that he is not, but very strong reason to believe that he is, responsible to God, and will assuredly be condemned by Him, if his belief is contrary to moral truth—and this leads me,

4th, In the fourth place, to remark, That it must be so from the nature of the case—for if the belief, that is the thing believed, be contrary to moral truth—in other words, if it be immoral falsehood, God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, must view it with disapprobation; and if it be a part of the character of the moral agent, as it undoubtedly is, he is guilty before God; and that, as I shall show, irrespective of the way by which he has come into that condition.

Though it appears to me that to every mind, willing to own supreme and absolute submission to God, this proposition is plain and undeniable; yet it may

be useful to prepare the mind for the reception of it by a few observations.

There are certain things which must be admitted to be first principles in morals as well as in science. Aristotle says of them, that they are known by their own evidence ; that except some first principles be taken for granted, there can be neither reason nor reasoning ; that it is impossible that every truth should admit of proof, otherwise proof would extend *in infinitum*, which is incompatible with its nature ; and that if ever men attempt to prove a first principle, it is because they are ignorant of the nature of proof.*

One of these first principles I hold to be that there is an everlasting distinction between truth and error, truth and falsehood — that truth is one, and we cannot imagine it otherwise. “Particular truths contemplated at the same time by many different minds, are on this account no more different than the present moment of duration is different in one place from what it is in another ; or than the sun is different, because viewed at the same time by myriads of eyes.”† It is therefore eternal and immutable ; and is not, as many people seem to think, at least to reason, a mere bundle of perceptions, as Hume thought the soul, changing every moment with the caprice or position of him who views it. It is equally a first principle, at least must be admitted by those who admit the existence of God—as the contrary is atheism—that He is true ; eternally “the fountain of all that is true, right, or perfect ;”‡ and therefore

* Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, quoted by Beattie on Truth, chap. i.

† Price on *Morals*, pp. oct. 147, 148.

‡ Ibid.

he must be eternally opposed to falsehood ; that if men reject truth and receive falsehood, it must be their own act and their own fault. It cannot be the doing of God, who is eternally opposed to falsehood. I decline altogether entering on the question of the origin of moral evil—how man came to be liable to error, or falsehood, or sin. Enough it is to know that he did so ; and he who admits the being and perfections of God, must admit that sin is and that God hates it—and our opponents can no more solve this question than we—we avoid it then altogether ; and take it for granted that God loves truth and hates falsehood ; and therefore, according to the Scripture decision, must have “created man upright though he hath sought out many inventions.”

It must be equally admitted as a first principle, that the claims of God are supreme, unyielding, and unquestionable—paramount to those of any creature ; and the claims of man can never, as a matter of right, interfere with the claims of God. But while He is sovereign and supreme, we must believe that the judge of all the earth will do right ; that he will not *command* that which is *not* right ; that he cannot *do* that which is not right ; and that he will not command that which is impossible. But, while he will not command that which is impossible, we must bear in mind that, by this very same admission, his will never can be in the nature of things impossible—and that, if he hath presented truth to our acceptance, as the subject in debate implies, its reception must be possible ; and where it is not possible, the impossibility is moral, that is, caused by sin—by what is in its nature immoral.

Let it, then, be impressed upon our minds, as

a great moral axiom, that the claims of man can never, in right or reason, interfere with the claims of God. Indisputable as this axiom must be admitted to be, yet it is the denial or forgetfulness of it that leads to so many doubts in matters of belief, and to so many transgressions in matters of practice. But, indeed, the denial of it is the very essence of sin—of our rebellion and opposition to the will of God—and, when man is brought fully to realize it, there shall neither be doubts nor opposition to the will of God. And I have been much pleased with the following statement of the celebrated Richard Baxter, whose talent and skill and experience in dissecting the human heart and examining truth will not be doubted: “I have, in the anatomizing of controversies which most hazard the church of Christ, found so much latent atheism and infidelity, that I think, among many who do not observe it, the true root of all the difference is, whether there be a God and a life to come, and whether the Scriptures be true?”* And, I am persuaded, that if men were prepared to make the claims of God, as they in truth are, “all in all,” instead of, in fact, doing the very reverse, practically making the claims of God nothing and those of men everything, they would have little hesitation in determining that we are responsible for the reception or rejection of that which God presents to our acceptance as true. But there is an extreme tendency in man to measure not only their fellow-men by themselves, but to measure the character and claims of God by themselves; to judge that he is altogether such a one as ourselves, that things that are great or little to us, are great or little to him, and that his

* Baxter's Practical Works, vol. xx, page 446.

attributes, rights, and claims, are no higher than, and are as mutable and easily set aside as, our own. But this is a grievous mistake. Because reason must admit the reality and propriety of the saying, as applied to God, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Man, then, in all his feelings, faculties, thoughts, and relations, must submit to God. And he has no moral right to set up any claims of mind, of will, or of conscience, in opposition to God. By doing so he is in the very act a rebel against the Majesty of heaven and earth. Unless you set up the claims of man above the claims of God, it is evident, that if his belief be in opposition to the mind and will of God, he is guilty. But, if any one ask, How am I to know that what you affirm to be the mind and will of God is so, and that I am guilty in rejecting it? I answer, —The question is not between you and me; we are not defining the rule of duty or respect between man and man, but between man and his God. It is with God you have to do in this matter. And if he commands to receive truth and you choose falsehood, dare you tell the Almighty, I cannot but receive the falsehood? Is this not insulting the Almighty to his face?

Observe that it will not do to say, that it is enough if I examine evidence. It may be enough to say this to a fellow-mortal; and all he can reply is, See that you do examine, and that there be neither prejudice nor mistake. But the same reply will not do to the Almighty. The thing commanded is, not the examination of evidence, but the belief and reception of truth. You are responsible, certainly, for the way of examining evidence; but the thing that is

the object of the command is not the way of examining, but the belief itself which is commanded ; and if it is not yielded, it is opposition to the mind of God. The willingness or unwillingness to examine evidence is not that submission of the understanding and will which is the object of the command. It is altogether a different thing ; and therefore will not make up “for the thing which answers and fulfils the command, and is wholly destitute of the virtue which the command seeks.”*

I see not how this reasoning can be evaded by any one admitting the being and perfections of God. The irresponsibility claimed seems to me atheistical, nay a deifying of the creature : “As if,” to use the words of an old writer, “our conscience had a prerogative royale, beside a rule ; yea, (which is prodigious) in its simple apprehensions of God, of the Mediator, of the revealed will of God, above the law of God. For, 1st, This way bringeth in Aristotle’s *δοκει δε*, and the world’s *אמרים רבים* so *I think*, and *and all say so* ; and our faith and hope must be resolved in the first principle of scepticism, so *it seems to me*. For the young daughters of the minde, the simple acts of apprehending, knowing, believing God and divine truths, are innocent, harmless, and ill-lesse soul-works, being from under all dominion of either free will or a Divine law ; and the minde, a free borne absolute princesse, can no more incur guiltinesse in its operations about an infinite sovereign God and his revealed will, by this lawlesse way, than the fire can in burning, the sunne in enlightening, the stone in moving downward, be arraigned of any breach of law.”† Such is

* Edwards on the Will, part iii, section v.

† Rutherford.

the consequence, if it be admitted that man is not responsible for his belief; if he has no control over it; and is no more a subject of praise or blame about it than for the hue of his skin or the height of his stature, in which he has nothing whatever to do—a sentiment impious and atheistic—which places the mind of man on the throne of God, and casts down the Almighty to the ground. With the men who maintain it I must say, “My soul, come not thou into their secret, and to their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.”

Though it appears to me that this reasoning is perfectly conclusive, it may be useful to make one or two observations which will serve to confirm it.

1st. It is evidently implied, in what we have said, that error is contrary to the mind and will of God. It is plain that this is true of all error—and of moral error clearly. It then takes, in this latter case, the more odious name of falsehood; and it follows, as a matter of course, that error is not innocent. Now, lest there should be a confusion in any one's mind which would make our doctrine difficult of reception, let it be observed, that there is an obvious distinction between simple *ignorance* and *error*. Simple ignorance may arise from natural incapacity, and, in regard to many things, is a necessary attribute—or defect, we should perhaps say—of a finite being; and he may, therefore, be innocently ignorant of that which God, when he originally created man a holy though a finite creature, did not give him the capacity to understand.*

* When this incapacity, even when ultimately it has become physical, has been the effect of sin, either more

But error is a very different thing. It implies a judgment of the mind in a matter brought under its consideration: ignorance that is innocent is a mere negation of knowledge. But error is either a judgment passed, where it had not the means of deciding correctly, and is therefore presumptuous, or where it had the means and did not use them fully or faithfully; so that, by this distinction, we are not required to decide what are the limits of human knowledge and capacity in matters of belief. But this we do know, that if God commands us to believe, and we do it not, we violate his command, and we must answer for it; and, as he is just, and holy, and wise, and almighty, we must suffer the penalty.

2nd. If error were an innocent thing, then the more wicked a man became, the more innocent he would be; because, it is a well-known fact, that wickedness blinds the mind, perverts the judgment, stupefies and sears the conscience; and men have only to proceed in this course till they arrive at the horrible pitch of calling evil good, and good evil—of losing all moral perceptions—and then they would, on this doctrine, be altogether innocent, when they had degraded themselves to the condition of “natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed.”

3d. It may be asserted that it is extremely difficult to know the truth, constituted as we are; yet this, though admitted, does not touch the argument we have adduced, as difficulties with the creature, especially when there is not only the probability, but the certainty, that his faculties are weakened, and

immediately or remotely, it cannot be innocent. To say so would imply a consequence, alike abhorrent to reason and Scripture; namely, that God is the author of sin.

his views confused by sin, cannot destroy the claims of the Creator. But we add further, that the same reasoning which would say that the difficulties of knowing the truth, absolve us from the obligation to receive it, would absolve us from all duty whatsoever. We are as naturally formed to know moral truth as moral justice, and we are as much called upon to decide in the one as in the other. They are both alike agreeable to God and demanded of the creature; and there are men that affirm they cannot see the distinction between justice and injustice, purity and impurity, honesty or dishonesty, between a moral virtue and a bodily defect, more than between truth or falsehood. And I know not why those who would repel with indignation the former, think they may receive with favour the latter.

There is nothing in the nature of the case that absolves man from guilt in refusing to receive with the mind and will, and with the submission of the conscience, the truth which God commands us to believe, more than the purity, or justice, or mercy, he commands us to practise. They come alike from God; and the mind is no more beyond the reach of God, than the external conduct. They are alike subject to the same great Being; and the rebellion of the one is as gross an insult to Him, who looketh on the heart, as the rebellion of the other. Let no man, therefore, presume in either to resist his will, and yet imagine he is innocent. To plead I cannot believe when God presents an object of belief, is as guilty as to say, I cannot do when God commands to obey. It is only an aggravation of the crime. And in both, we may say, Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? shall the thing

formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? The very question indicates the presence of a rebellious heart. Well may it be asked, Who art thou, O worm of the dust and child of sin, that darest to place thy belief, thy judgment, thy claims, in opposition to the Almighty? Dost thou resist his power? No. Dost thou question his wisdom? No. Dost thou arraign his justice? No. Dost thou doubt his truth? No. Dost thou challenge his goodness? No. Whence, then, thy resistance? whence thy blindness and stupidity? Are they from Him? No. Whence, then, but from some rebel against his authority, whether thyself or an enemy, to whom thou dost yield obedience? Who then is to answer to God but the rebel? Thou makest thyself, "not a doer of the law, but a judge." "Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not." "Thinkest thou this to be right that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's."* "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it."†

Who then may dare say unto God, What doest thou? But, you reply, I have done all I can, and I cannot receive your opinions. But this question is not about any man's opinions, but about God's truth. Canst thou, then, make the same reply to him—dost thou forget that thou art a sinner—that sin is hateful to God—wherever it is it implies guilt, and shuts the eyes of the mind? But I appeal to thy conscience

* Job xxxiii. 12, 14; xxxv. 2.

† xl. 2.

and demand of thee to answer—not to me, but to God—hast thou in rejecting, for instance, the Bible, as the word of God, done all that you could, with all the earnestness, diligence, perseverance, and prayer, that a matter between God and thy soul, as the opposing parties, and the enmity or friendship of God, now and for evermore, demand? Art thou indeed willing to do the will of God whatever it may require? Such a man is not to be found. But until thou canst say, “*I am* willing to do God’s will,” thou art never prepared to say that I know the doctrine is not of God. For this, after all, is the true test; and, until thou canst say so, thou canst never be safe in refusing to receive it.

4th. It plainly follows from, and is implied in what hath been said, that we are morally responsible for our belief, though not embodied in action. What difference, except in the degree of criminality that it indicates, can action make as it affects God? and in this sense it is true in the words of Elihu, Job xxxv. 5, “Look unto the heavens and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.” In error as well in action there is contrariety to the mind of God. There is contrariety to his knowledge—to his wisdom; and, if uttered or acted upon, to his power and to his government of the world—not ignorance merely—not a mere negation of knowledge, but opposition; and where, after all, is the belief that lies dormant in the mind? There is no such thing, for “out of the abundance of the

heart the mouth" will and must speak—and if error, falsehood, be uttered, who shall say that it shall be as dormant or inactive in the mind of another as of his own? Can a man take fire in his bosom and not be burnt? Take an instance—atheism or the denial of a future state. Can such opinions be seriously entertained, and no effects result? As well may you extinguish the sun, and affirm that the world shall still be the same. The horrors of the French Revolution were the natural, and considering the passions of men, the necessary result of their denial of a God—and the horrid wretches in one town in the north of France, who followed the dead-cart, employed to convey away their murdered victims, were only acting out their belief, if that may be called belief which is the negation of all principle, when they cried, "We may do what we please, there is no God."

These are strong instances. But we remind our objector, that he is not at liberty to select for his argument the shades of unbelief that are most nice and difficult of detection—nice and difficult, that is, with man, for with God there is no such thing. If he contend for his right to reject and be irresponsible in little, I contend for mine to be irresponsible in much—he must abide by the general principle. Besides, what knowest thou, O vain man, who art but of yesterday and knowest nothing, of a small shade of unbelief? What knowest thou of its progress and effects throughout eternity? In nature, two lines which at their outset could scarcely be perceived to deviate from the right line, yet drawn out shall never meet, but diverge farther and farther as they lengthen. And a small deviation from truth, either in the moral

or natural world, if God left it to itself, yet carried out through his vast universe, and extending throughout eternal duration in all its consequences, who can tell the result? who shall say that it might not overturn the throne of God himself, if he admitted its innocence, and consequently sanctioned its uncontrolled existence and activity? For wherever you admit control, there is then irresponsibility no longer.

In truth, it is just as reasonable to speak of small sins, as small errors—and those who maintain the one, do in point of fact maintain the other, and from the same cause—that in their minds God is *not* all and in all.

5th. We come therefore, in the last place, to show that unbelief of the gospel does arise from an evil heart.*

This part of the subject hath been well treated of by various writers. It is the part discussed by Dr. Wardlaw, and handled by Dr. Barrow, in his sermons on Faith, vol. iv., with all the strength of thought, and masculine and copious eloquence, which distinguish his writings.

I shall endeavour to give the substance of this argument. For a full discussion you must have recourse to 'Barrow. Before doing this, I shall premise a few observations illustrative of what our Saviour says, "If any man will, or is willing to do, God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

Had sin never entered into the world, it will be readily admitted that all men would have had correct notions of God—that his perfections would all have

* For Scripture meaning of the word "heart," see p. 45.

commended themselves to their reason; that his laws would have been at once perceived to be holy, just, and good—and entire submission would have been joyfully yielded to them as the highest happiness of the intelligent creature. Any thing that was not accordant with the Divine perfections, or any thing contrary to the Divine law, would have been readily perceived; and there would have been no difficulty in knowing what was religious truth or falsehood. The understanding would have been able to know and the heart prepared to love the truth. It will plainly follow, then, that just in proportion as the human being is restored to this condition, or, to save dispute, placed in it—for certainly he is not in it now—just in proportion as he is disposed to reverence God and obey his will, in the very same proportion will he be able to discover whether any doctrine be of God. Hence the propriety of the Scripture doctrine of the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit of God, that man may discern and receive the truth. It is a matter of experience, that according to the degree of moral purity in the heart—of willingness to submit to all the laws of God—is the correctness of the views we form of religious doctrine. Men naturally form and desire to entertain such notions of God as may favour their own passions, views, and interests. They like not to hold up before their minds, as the object of love and adoration, a Being, whose every attribute, or a law, whose every demand, is a condemnation of their iniquity. And the actual history of man teaches, that for this cause men “did not *like* to retain God in their knowledge—but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened, and they worshipped and

served the creature rather than the Creator." And that this arose from the corruption of the heart is evident from the fact, that the grossest idolatry and wickedness have been in those countries where the human understanding was most active and cultivated—and just because it was the more efficient handmaid of wickedness. It is plain that the reception of the truths of God and the capability of distinguishing them, depend on the moral rather than on the intellectual condition of man. That is to say, sin instantly affects the understanding. Original sin hath wholly disabled and indisposed it to any thing good. An understanding of no great reach may yet be under law to God. But the corruption of sin both incapacitates and indisposes for obeying God. The man who fears God and acknowledges his supremacy, and would obey his laws, can easily tell whether any doctrine be of God. By the simple knowledge of and submission to what is right, could men tell of any doctrine whether it were true and fitted to advance the glory of God—or the designs of man, or any power hostile to God. Beelzebub will not cast out Beelzebub. Thus the Saviour never sought his own glory, and appealed to this fact as a test of his mission; and by the same test may you try the claims of the sacred Scriptures in general to your belief, and the claims of their individual doctrines in particular; and if you examine the Scriptures from the beginning to the end, you will find they make God *all* and in *all*—and their universal and sternest voice is against all that is opposed to the honour of God; and of all the instruments which God employed to communicate the truths therein revealed, not one of them can be charged even by the

malignant calumnies of infidelity, with being men who sought their own glory or their own interest.

Let any one apply this principle to the great leading doctrines of Revelation, and it will be found that they all commend themselves to the mind willing to do the will of God.*

If they are not received, then we contend that it is from an evil heart of unbelief. The causes of this unbelief are as powerful in the human mind as they are various. Indeed, so perfectly well is this known, that philosophers, in treating of matters of science, natural or moral, have thought it necessary not merely to intimate the general existence of causes that pervert the mind in the examination of evidence, but to enumerate them and to lay down rules, by which it may be preserved from their influence. Every scholar hath heard of Lord Bacon's attempt to reduce them to a system, under the general name of Idols—an

* "And I suppose it is to be laid down for certain, that the same character, the same inward principle, which, after a man is convinced of the truth of religion, renders him obedient to the precepts of it, would, were he not thus convinced, set him about the examination of it, upon its system and evidence being offered to his thoughts; and that in the latter state, his examination would be with an impartiality, seriousness, and solicitude, proportionable to what his obedience is in the former. And as inattention, negligence, want of all serious concern, about a matter of such a nature and such importance, when offered to man's consideration, is, before a distinct conviction of its truth, as real immoral depravity and dissoluteness, as neglect of religious practice after such conviction; so, active solicitude about it, and fair impartial consideration of its evidence before such conviction, is as really an exercise of a morally right temper, as is religious practice after."—Butler's Analogy, part ii. chap. 6.

expression used with great moral propriety ; because truth alone deserves our homage and regard, and all that draws away the mind from it to the love of error, seduces into idolatry. His first class are those causes of error which are common to the whole race of man—which he calls idols of the tribe, and which are multiplied and various. The second are those prejudices which are peculiar to the individual, from education, profession, or personal temperament, or the like. The third, those which arise from the imperfections and abuse of language. The fourth, those which arise from the fabulous dogmas of philosophy, or false modes of inquiry or demonstration.

In illustrating the first of these, that great master of reason says, most beautifully, (and I doubt not but his reverence for the moral truths of divine revelation freed his great mind, and gave him a key to detect the fallacies of unsound modes of philosophizing,) “The idols of the tribe are founded in human nature itself, and in the very tribe or race of man. For it is falsely asserted that human sense is the measure of things ; but on the contrary, all perceptions, as well of sense as of mind, are from the analogy of man—not from the analogy of the universe. And the human intellect is as an unequal mirror to the rays of things which mingles its own nature with the nature of things, and distorts and infects it.”* The same thing is quite familiar in the common language of every-day life. We speak of being blinded by passion, by interest, by prejudice, and every one understands perfectly what is meant by such expressions.

* *Novum Organum*, Lib. i. Aph. 41.

If this be true of the human mind in *all* the common objects of truth and knowledge, how vastly more so in the objects of Revelation! and those, therefore, who affect to be especially wise and rational in rejecting Revelation will respect this great master in philosophy ; and examine with extreme care, whether there are no idols seducing them from the truth, and preventing them from receiving, or even examining, that which is opposed to so many passions, feelings, and interests of corrupted man.

It is said in Scripture, "This is the condemnation, that light hath come into the world and men have loved darkness rather than the light, their deeds being evil. He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved." This is a fact in the history of man that cannot be denied. We all know it, and we all feel it. It cannot be denied that men are sinners. "He that saith," (if such a man there be,) "he hath no sin, deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him." And we all as surely know that we have a strong aversion to let our bad passions, characters, and conduct, be fairly revealed, scrutinized, judged, and condemned. We cannot bear to bring them to the light of that holy religion which witnesses against them, and pours its heavenly light on all their enormity ; and far less to own the authority of that Judge that dooms them to infamy, and ourselves to punishment ; and until we are actually prepared to hate and renounce them, to see that they are contrary to God's will, and willing to submit to it, we *will* not own the doctrine to be of God. Hence said our Saviour to the corrupt and prejudiced Jews, "Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life." They *loved* the

darkness because they feared the light; and remaining in it were most justly condemned. Hence we read in Scripture of those who said, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Of "men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith." "Men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness." "To them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but *their very mind and conscience* is defiled." And Barrow well says, "Such pollution is not only consequent to, and connected with, but antecedent to infidelity, blinding the mind so as not to see the truth, and perverting the will, so as not to close with it."

So that doing, or being willing to do the will of God, and knowing the doctrine, are essentially connected. "Faith and a good conscience are twins born together, inseparable from each other, living and dying together. So the Scripture exhibits the shipwreck of the faith, as the shipwreck of a good conscience. "Hold faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning the faith have made shipwreck."

But, let it not be supposed that this cause does not predispose against the gospel, except in cases of various and very gross profligacy. The greater the wickedness, the greater will be the aversion to come into contact with the witness, the judge, the sentence, and the punishment. But in every shade of wickedness it will hold true. Because every possible shade of sin Christianity doth expose and condemn; and, therefore, to see how deeply this cause operates in disposing to infidelity, you have only to place before your minds all the shades of moral imperfection and

guilt, and estimate their force if you can. My time will not permit a minute enumeration. A few will make out my argument, and show that no human being may dare to plead that he is certain that no sinful bias mingled with his rejection of Christianity, and therefore he may not wisely conclude that he is safe in resisting it.

Every man must admit that he does not love God supremely; is he, therefore, prepared to receive, without any prejudice, that revelation as divine which commands him to love God with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, on pain of some terrible punishment? Does thy mind acquiesce in this? If so, you will comply; for, in this case, acquiescence and compliance are the very same thing. So far is this from being the issue that a candid mind, contemplating the moral perfections of God, must acknowledge that "The carnal mind is enmity against God—is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Man is a selfish being, and is naturally predisposed against that religion that commands him, on pain of the divine displeasure, and of divine punishment, to love his neighbour, his fellow-men, as himself; and pronounces unforgiven, and certain not to obtain forgiveness, the man who determines and continues to refuse to forgive other men their trespasses, and who entertains a revengeful temper; and pronounces the man a murderer who hates his brother; and, at the same time, decides that no murderer can be admitted to the kingdom of heaven, but "shall have his part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

Carry in your mind that we do not like that which opposes and condemns us; and hence, even those

who profess to receive the gospel, too often reject its morality, and cannot willingly or truly receive itself. An impure man—and such by nature are all men; and, let it be observed, that the characteristics I am now giving belong to our whole race—an impure man cannot but dread and dislike, and would reject if he could, that religion which condemns impurity in its fountain, in the very heart, thought, and desire.

There is no principle more prevalent in the heart of man than pride; and the proud man cannot love that religion that tells us that God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble, and whose whole doctrines, dispensations, and means of salvation, as well as precepts, convey the lesson and command, that no flesh may glory in God's presence—abase the pride of reason which is so strong in man, and fears not to bring to its miserable bar the incomprehensibilities of the great God, and pretends to scan the relations of infinitude—denounce the pride and self-righteousness and Pharisaism not less powerful—condemn ambition and self-preference above our fellow-men—make all men equal in the sight of God, and command that each esteem other better than themselves—that declare the poor in spirit the possessors of the kingdom of heaven; in short, make the entire renunciation of all confidence, conceit, or boasting in any thing that belongs to us, virtue, talent, knowledge, wisdom, power, strength, riches, or station, not only a duty, but so essential, that without it, we are in an unfit state to receive the free salvation of Christ, or to enter into the presence of God. “He that exalteth himself shall be abased—Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot

enter into the kingdom of heaven." How opposed the pride of man to such a religion! Accordingly, in all ages, the self-renouncing and humiliating aspects of the doctrines of the cross have ever proved the most offensive both to Jews and Gentiles. The Jews would not believe, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God; and "How can ye believe," said our Saviour, "who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God?"

It were easy to proceed in the same way, enumerating the various corruptions and passions of the human heart, and vices of the human character and conduct; its covetousness, which the Scripture pronounces idolatry; its love of the world, whose friendship it pronounces enmity with God; its intemperance and kindred vices, which peculiarly pollute and unfit for the presence of God; and, in regard to one and all of these, it commands to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts; otherwise they cannot be Christ's disciples; sparing none, and demanding the sacrifice of all, though it should be painful as the cutting off of a right hand, and plucking out a right eye, or renouncing the tenderest relations and affections of life. And hence there hath ever been this question, "These are hard sayings, who can bear them?"

These, therefore, do operate, without any doubt, against the reception of the gospel. They are not innocent, but criminal; and knowing the extent to which they prevail in the human character, and from the existence and tendencies to which no man can plead exemption, no one can affirm with truth that his rejection of Christianity, or his unbelief, is not

criminal, unless he is sure that not one of all these has biassed his decision in the smallest degree ; in short, that he is willing in all these and everything else, to do the will of God ; and yet he cannot believe that the doctrine is of God. Such a case never occurred in the world.

But, besides all these, which operate directly against the reception of the gospel, and are evil in their nature, there are also those indirect vices, which, for the sake of distinction, not of extenuation of their criminality, we may call imperfections, or rather, perhaps, derangements of the human character which they have produced, and do greatly influence the mind in its contemplation and reception of the gospel—such as that callous indifference and unimpressibility of mind so often alluded to in Scripture as “blindness—hardness of heart—spirit of slumber—deadness” that will not listen, and the like, which are most unwarrantable where God and our salvation are concerned ; that immoveable sloth which will not be troubled to inquire, far less to lead a life of active self-denied piety and holiness ; which puts off the evil day and says, “Go thy way for this time, and at a more convenient season I will send for thee—we will hear thee again of this matter ;” that grossness and stupidity of mind which vice produces, even unfitting for the activity of mind, and clearness of judgment, necessary in the business of the world, or the pursuit of science or secular knowledge of any kind ; that perverseness and obstinacy of spirit which spurn resistance or control, and disdain to yield or own a fault, a mistake, or a crime, with all those caprices and petulant humours, watching, as it were, for causes of offence, and seeking apologies for re-

jection. All these and kindred causes form so many prepossessions against the gospel, and hold possession of the mind as a strong army, as a legion of devils, that it is not only no wonder that men reject the gospel, but are such as to make it difficult to see how they can receive it, till a divine power expel them, and make it certain that no man ever rejected the gospel where these criminal causes did not more or less prevail, and where they did so, leaving the man without excuse; and, making the plea that man is not "morally responsible for his belief," altogether unjustifiable.

We see then how entirely reasonable it is that the Scriptures pronounce unbelief a sin, which God will not only judge, but which he will condemn. It hath a moral guilt in it. It is a violation of a command, and that from a depraved heart. Faith or belief, on the other hand, is homage to God—a submission of the heart and mind to his will. It is not the mere reception of certain abstract truths, as simple notions terminating in themselves; but is of a moral nature, intended to influence and form the heart and life and conversation, and is, with great propriety, called in Scripture "the *obedience* of faith." God's judgments are denounced against those who "*obey not the truth.*" "*Heresies*" are enumerated among the "works of the flesh," which exclude from the "kingdom of God;" and all this, from the principles we illustrated, is in accordance with the strictest philosophical propriety. The awful guilt attributed to unbelief in the Scriptures, then, and the condemnation awarded, is not a mere arbitrary unintelligible appointment, but necessarily arises from the supremacy of God, which must be asserted over the rebellion of the creature.

Christianity—the gospel of Christ—is not a mere grace, though it is the most wonderful grace ; but it is besides an authoritative presentation of a system of truth, which all centres in Christ, accompanied not only with the general declaration, “He that believeth shall be saved,” but “This is His commandment, that ye should believe in Him whom He hath sent,” and attaching the penalty, “He that believeth not shall be condemned ; nay, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God ;” and for the simple reason, that they know not nor approve the doctrine, because they do not, neither are willing to do, the will of God. It is said, again, “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost”—lost by their own fault, because “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not,” and “God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they *all*,” whosoever they may be, “might be condemned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness,” and therefore *would* not, and by their own wickedness could not, believe the truth. It is most just—and let men seriously ponder the warning, that Christ shall appear to destroy the wicked “with the brightness of his coming, to take vengeance on those that know not God, nor *obey* the gospel of his Son.”

Having thus stated what we hold to be the great principle of human responsibility for belief, viz., the simple fact that God hath proposed a revelation in general, or any truth in particular, for the reception of his creature man ; let us now endeavour to see how this principle applies to the doctrines we have maintained. And the question must now be, Are they such as in their nature and consequences entitle us,

irrespective of all evidence to the contrary, to affirm that God hath not revealed them at all? He will be a bold man that will make this declaration; but unless he can make and maintain it with some show of proof, it will not be a sufficient answer to them, simply to say, that man, as a sinner, cannot be held responsible for rejecting them, or incur any guilt in the rejection of them. It must be borne in mind, that man is a sinner, and as such, confessedly indisposed, if not disabled, to listen to the voice of God. The question then, in reality, reduces itself to this—Hath God spoken, and is there, in a disability which guilt, either original or actual, hath induced, any thing which renders the sinner inexcusable in refusing to listen to any one truth of God? None that we can discover, unless it be pleaded that sin hath been introduced into man's heart without man's fault. Resist it and deny it as we may, we hold the fact that all have sinned, and that there is none righteous, no, not one, to be the proof at once of man's misery, and his punishment, and consequently of man's guilt. The Deist is as much concerned in maintaining the perfect character of God as is the Christian; and the former can no more account on the admitted perfections of Jehovah for the existence of moral evil than the latter, while he can propose no feasible shadow of a remedy. We are not reasoning with the atheist, though we have indicated in the previous pages a principle by which we can even shut him up to accountability. We take the existence of moral evil as a fact reconcilable with the perfections of Jehovah. Taking it as such, we then affirm that the very fact of the universal prevalence of sin and misery, without any examination, is to our mind the clearest possible

proof of man's guilt. Otherwise a consequence must result, which those we have chiefly in view will not readily meet, viz., that God is the author of sin, and man is a sinner innocently—a sentiment as contradictory as it is blasphemous. Guilt is equivalent to responsibility: wherever there is guilt there is responsibility. If then we can show that man is in a state of sin, consequently, in a state of guilt,—that every human being is so, and, consequently, in a state of misery, and that this misery is the result of sin, in other words, the consequence of guilt, is even so great as utterly to disable the guilty subject of it from all spiritual or moral ability to do any good thing, to receive the “true sayings of God” till God give him the power, it will be a difficult undertaking to show that the subject of such an inability is not guilty, and liable to punishment for rejecting the testimony of God. To our mind this inability is a necessary effect of sin, and demonstrates its exceeding sinfulness, its dreadful malignity. It is essentially destructive and opposed to good—to all good, to good of every kind, and of every degree. We can discover no possible opposition between our doctrine of human inability, up to the full extent we have maintained it, and human responsibility. We do not make responsibility void; on the contrary, by thus maintaining the exceeding sinfulness and malignity of sin, we clearly establish it, and we can see a most powerful reason why God should propose to men a grand scheme of salvation, in its nature entirely fitted to accomplish the gracious ends of their salvation, but through man's guilty inability, would not, apart from God's electing love and sovereign efficacious grace, save a single soul; and yet all men be guilty before God

in hating it, and rejecting it. This they would certainly do; and yet God be glorified, and Christ become a sweet savour in them that perish. Thus might be brought out, in fearful blackness, the exceeding sinfulness of sin before the universe.* Now the ends which might thus be served in such a plan of salvation revealed, while not a soul was saved, are still served; and perhaps more wonderfully served when, by the sovereign grace, electing love, and special saving power of God, and by a propitiation intended to be effectual to them alone,—a peculiar people, saved of the Lord, are made the trophies of redeeming love, and efficacious grace:—while yet a people, sinful and guilty by their own fault, are not only responsible for their original guilt, but for the fearful aggravations of it brought out in hating God, rejecting his mercy, and treading under foot the Son of God, and his great work of redemption, which, without his electing love and efficacious grace, is rendered vain, and treated by them as contemptible and base. The whole work is wrought out, the sufficiency is absolute, the offer is free and unlimited, and sincere to all who will; but none, BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN sin, either can or will; and God is just in putting sin in the sinner (who is sin—enmity to God) in the position of manifesting its dreadful nature, in utterly disabling the sinner, and displaying the eternal justice of God in its aggravated condemnation in the rejection of his Son.

We cannot help thinking that this goes a great way to explain the special applications of our general doctrine of responsibility, specially in regard to man's inability to receive the testimony of God.

* This would be a display of justice, but not of love.

The Scriptures plainly lay down this principle, that all men are bound to believe all that is therein revealed, and all that is therein commanded on the simple authority of God their author. The servants of Christ were not even required, in any instance, to perform miracles in proof of their divine commission; but to proclaim Christ's message in virtue of his supreme authority, and all men were to be held guilty who refused to receive it, from whatever cause it might be, because they could not be innocent in rejecting the counsel of God; therefore we read, Matt. x. 14, 15, "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city." When the apostles preached the word at Antioch in Pisidia, (Acts xxii.) they demanded acceptance of it both of Jews and Gentiles. And on their refusal it is said, (ver. 51.) "But they shook off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them." And yet it does not appear they wrought any miracles in proof of their divine commission, or did more than proclaim the authoritative truth of God.*

* There is another remarkable instance of this kind in the case of Paul, in his voyage to Rome. Paul, who was no sailor, and totally unacquainted with such matters, yet divinely instructed, warned mariners of their danger; and they acting as prudent men, judging from appearances, an incommodious harbour where they were, and the south wind blowing softly, though Paul gave no proof of his divine commission, yet despising a warning from God, they came by harm and loss, and but for the grace of God would have perished.

The objection to man's responsibility consistently with his inability to receive the testimony of God, is stated in various forms, comprehended and answered in the following short passage of Halyburton on the Reason of Faith:—

“IX. We shall next shortly prove ‘that we are obliged in duty thus to believe the Scriptures, or to receive them as the word of God, and not of men.’ 1. The Scriptures are indeed, and hold forth themselves everywhere as the word of God. They are the oracles of God, which holy men of God spake by the motion of the Spirit of God, and wrote by divine inspiration, and the Holy Ghost speaks to us by them. Now when God utters oracles, speaks, writes, and utters his mind to us, we are in duty obliged and bound to assent to what he says, and yield what obedience he requires. This the very light of nature teacheth. 2. The Scriptures were written for this very end, that we might believe, and that believing we might have life, John xx. 30, 31. The Scriptures of the prophets (which contain the revelation of the mystery of God's will, otherwise not known) ‘according to the commandment of the everlasting God, are made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith,’ Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Again the Scriptures are termed a more sure word of prophecy than the voice from heaven, and men are said to do well to take heed to them, 2 Pet. i., toward the close. That is, it is their duty to take heed to them, or believe them. 3. The most dreadful judgments are threatened against those who receive not the word of God from the prophets or apostles, whether by word or writ, is all one. ‘Who-soever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city,’ Matt. x. 14, 15. Accordingly we find the apostles preach the word at Antioch in Pisidia, (Acts xiii.) demand acceptance of it both of Jews and Gentiles; and upon their refusal they testify against them in the way of the Lord's appointment, v. 51. Though

so far as we can learn, they there wrought no miracle to confirm their mission. 4. We have above heard the apostle commending the Thessalonians for receiving the word as the word of God, and not of man, (1 Thess. ii. 13.) which sufficiently shows that it was their duty.

“X. Whereas some may here say, How can it be our duty to believe the word of God, since it has been above proved that we are not able of ourselves thus to do it? I answer briefly, 1. The very light of nature requires perfect obedience of us; and yet we are not able to yield it. 2. The Scriptures plainly require that we serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, and yet we must have grace whereby to do it. 3. We have destroyed ourselves, and that through this, our faith or natural ability of believing truths upon testimony is so impaired and weakened, and by prejudices so obstructed otherwise, that we are not able to discern the evidence of God’s authority in his word, nor assent thereon to his testimony in a due manner, yet this cannot prejudge reasonably God’s right to demand credit to his word, whereon he has impressed such prints of his authority, as are sufficiently obvious to any one’s faith, that is not thus faultily depraved. 4. We have therefore no reason to question God, who gave us eyes, which we have put out, but to blame ourselves, and aim to do his will,—that is, wait on him in all the ways of his own appointment; and we have no reason to despair, but that in this way we may have graciously given of God’s sovereign grace, an understanding to know whether these truths are of God, or they who spoke them did it of themselves. Though we cannot claim this as what is our due.

“XI. Whereas some may hereon object, ‘that many, who have for a long time heard and perused this word, have not perceived this light, nor felt this power, and, on this supposition, seem exempted from any obligation to believe the word,’ I answer:

“1. Many who have spent not a few years in prying into the works of God in the world, have not discerned to this day the beaming evidence and clear declarations of his glory in them; yet none will hereon say, that they are excuseable, or that want of an evidence is chargeable on

the works of God. And why should not the case be allowed the same as to the word? May they not have this evidence, though men do not discern it? And may not men, even on account of this evidence be obliged to believe them?

“No wonder many discern not this light, and are not affected with it, since all men have put out their own eyes, or impaired by their own fault, that faith or power of discerning the voice of God, speaking either by his word or works, which our natures originally had. In many this evil is increased, and this power further weakened by their shutting their eyes, and entertainment of prejudices manifestly unjust against God's word and works. Others turn away their eyes, and will not look to, or attend the word in that way wherein God ordains them to attend to it, that they may discern its light, and feel its power. And God has hereon judicially given many up to the power of Satan to be further blinded. And no wonder they, whose eyes the God of this world has blinded, should not discern the glory of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, shining into their minds.*

There is a latent principle of infidelity in the minds of many professing Christians, and we ever and anon find it rising on the surface of their opinions and writings, viz., that we are not bound to receive as truth and duty that which our own minds do not perceive to be truth and duty; and all obligation to believe and do, resolves itself in reality into the judgment, it may be the whim and caprice, of guilty and blinded man; a principle which makes the criminal, judge and jury in his own cause, and that too when the almighty, all-wise, and holy God is the accuser and injured sovereign; a principle which the whole providence as well as word of God plainly condemn.

* Halyburton on the Reason of Faith, pp. 138, 139, 149, 150.

There are many evils resulting from the disorder introduced by sin, which it is a man's duty to avoid, and yet he is unable ; but he does not on that account escape the misery and suffering ; and yet who that has any reverence for God will charge God foolishly ? The man at the pool of Bethesda was doubtless disabled, and could not go to the pool, yet he suffered the effects for many long years. The able and pious Samuel Rutherford places this matter in a clear light in few words : " Nor are we ashamed to say with the scriptures, it is as impossible to storm heaven, or make purchase of Christ, by the strength of nature, as for the dead man to take his grave in his two arms, and rise and lay death by him, and walk. Nor does this impossibility free the sinner from guiltiness and rebukes : 1st. Because it is a sinfully contracted inability, except he would deny original sin ; 2d. It is voluntary in us, and the bondage that we love ; 3d. The scripture both calls it impossibility and also rebukes it as sinful, John vi. 44 ; Rom. viii. 7, 8 ; Eph. ii. 1—3, 11—13 ; iv. 17—19 ; v. 8."*

Dr. Wardlaw, in contending for human ability to receive the divine testimony, argues as follows. " It is a maxim of justice, self-evidently necessary for the vindication of the divine government, in condemning for disobedience and unbelief, that some such ability there must be as to constitute a valid ground of accountableness ;—inasmuch as justice there can be none, in calling to account, and inflicting punishment, for not doing what there is no ability to do." He contends that the only inability is " disinclination," " nothing else and nothing more." We have already examined the general truth of this doctrine. Dr.

* Rutherford's *Drawing men to Christ*, p. 276.

Wardlaw seems to think this view of the subject absolutely necessary to responsibility. He says that there is requisite, "A ground in reference to MAN, on which, with divine authority, he might consistently be invited and commanded to accept it, and justly punished for the non-acceptance of it. This latter ground seems to me plainly to lie in the possession, on the part of man, of *natural ability*; the possession, that is, of all the natural powers necessary for understanding and believing divine truth, and for receiving and enjoying divine blessings; so that, with regard to such reception and enjoyment, it might be truly affirmed of every gospel hearer, he *may*, if he *will*; the sole hindrance lying in the will, or, which is the same thing, in the disposition as influencing and determining its volitions."* There is much in this passage we

* We cannot help remarking here that though Dr. Wardlaw writes with dignity, and does not descend to the offensive modes of stating his opinion, pursued by those parties so busily employed in beguiling unstable souls in the present day, yet his doctrine is as nakedly, we believe, opposed to the doctrine of grace; and we cannot help thinking that those recently cut off by the four Independent churches are only following his doctrines to their legitimate conclusions, in opposing the doctrines of election, subjective regeneration, and limited atonement. He has adopted, or at least advocates, the views of Camero, who thought thus to meet the craving in the human heart for a ground of human ability, to constitute a ground of responsibility, and a reason for a faith of man's own origination. But it did not then secure a half way resting place. It only helped them forward the full length of the journey to the tents of the Arminians, and gave them a show of vindication for quitting and refusing to return to the true tabernacles of Orthodoxy. So is it still, and so must it ever be, when you quit the strongholds of doctrinal consistency.

cannot now examine; we conceive it has been already met in the preceding pages. We may however make one or two passing observations: 1st. In regard to the "will, or the disposition determining its (the will's) volitions," we confess we do not understand it, nor believe any such self-determining power in the will. The will determining the will, is to us unintelligible. But we understand perfectly the will's being determined by views or motives, and consequently being affected by the viewing faculty, in other words, by the discerning capacity. And the Bible declares that such capacity of spiritual discernment man has not. But he has it not, because,—ALL have sinned. If the whole evil lie in a mere will, disinclination, or indisposition, we are totally unable to comprehend how TRUTH should be the great instrument employed by the Spirit of God for its removal, truth being specially the object of the understanding. 2nd. The phrase "natural powers," has either a reference to man as he came pure from the hand of God before the fall. If so we assent to it at once, and to all the consequences deduced from it by Dr. Wardlaw. Or it has a reference to man as now constituted a sinner through the fall of Adam, and in this sense we most pointedly deny that man is in "the possession of all the natural powers for understanding and believing divine truth, and for receiving and enjoying divine blessings." If he were, we cannot understand the necessity of his being "born again," not disposed to exercise a new volition, but made a new creature. This we have argued already. The whole question whether man, not "now in the possession of the natural powers" referred to, is justly held responsible, depends on the question, whether as a matter of fact man is, or as a matter of possibility,

may be, deprived of them by sin. That he may be, he will be very bold who will deny. All scripture plainly indicates that sin not only defiles but weakens; and it would be a very strange idea of sin, that pure intellectual spiritual existences could not be affected by it, whereas its very nature is to destroy.

3rd. In the passage above quoted, Dr. Wardlaw seems altogether to overlook the element of this inability being the result, not only of sin in Adam, but of sin in every man, proved guilty by the very fact of his being a sinner; no matter how he has come into that condition. Through the whole of this chapter we have looked in vain for any consideration of this element, in estimating the fact or extent of man's responsibility for an inability of nature, induced by man's, and every man's, own sin. For whether we can explain it or no, we affirm that in whatever way man has come by it, his sin is his own sin at the last. This was a point which it was incumbent on any writer maintaining his views to meet, as it is the main ground adduced in their support by divines who maintain the opposite views. Dr. Wardlaw says again at p. 165, "Whatever theory we form on the confessedly difficult subject of the transmission of original corruption, it must to all be sufficiently obvious, that the actual possession and influence of holy desires and affections, can never be necessary to render man responsible for the want of them. This were clearly self-contradictory. What is necessary to such an accountableness, is a capacity for knowing and loving God, along with sufficient means of the knowledge and sufficient motives of the love," &c.

Now on this passage we ask, Why is it that

“the actual possession and influence of holy desires can never be necessary to render men responsible for the want of them?” We apprehend it is, because the very want of them is man’s sin. But we have no greater difficulty for our own parts in determining the same responsibility, in the want of those very powers and faculties for receiving the testimony of God, which are as much an original part of a rational, immortal, moral, and accountable being, as holy desires and affections; and the want of them in such a being is as certainly the result of his sin and guilt, and for such a want he is therefore responsible.

We do not see why Dr. Wardlaw may not apply the fact that men are “sinners,” to meet the difficulty in the instance before us, which he does so pointedly in the case of those who deny the sovereignty of God in the salvation of the elect. He says, “To what then are we to ascribe the salvation of those who are saved? To the distinguishing grace of God,—of that God who ‘hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.’ Shall we call this *partiality*? We call it *sovereignty*, dealing with men, not as *creatures*, but as *sinners*,—with the universally guilty, and unworthy. Why this incessantly fond recurrence to these offensive terms *partial* and *partiality*? If you mean, that we cannot hold the sovereignty of God without charging him with *partiality*;—that we cannot hold that ‘God is love,’ without holding that his love must be a love which *makes no distinctions*;—that we cannot believe in the righteousness of God, without believing it to be a righteousness which restricts his mercy, and binds him to treat all the guilty and unworthy in the same manner;—we must renounce our faith both in the volume of providence, and in that

of revelation, ere we can possibly agree with you.”*

If God's sovereignty in the salvation of a sinner implies no partiality, as we fully and cordially believe and maintain, because all men are *sinner*s, as well as *creatures*, and deserve wrath, and as such require an exercise of sovereignty, in their election to eternal life, (though the Dr. pleads that the purpose of election lies only in the purpose to apply the work of Christ by the Holy Spirit), we cannot discover why the same distinction does not fully vindicate Jehovah in holding men guilty, in being both unable and unwilling, *through their sin*, to obey the gospel call. If it be impossible they can be saved without the special application of salvation to them by the Holy Spirit, and yet they are held responsible for their own eternal condemnation, *because they are sinners*, it matters little whether it be the spiritually discerning or the spiritually willing faculty that is disabled. It is the same sinner, the same mind that sins, and how one part of it is ruined by sin, and the other still possessed of such capacity as to render it responsible, we do not understand, and are not called to understand, seeing scripture nowhere maintains any such strange doctrine.

We may, in connection with this, notice the following passage: “Without ability to know, and ability to act, there can be no such thing (as responsibility). Where ability ends accountableness ends.” If this were said of “creatures” as such, we could both understand and assent to it; because we can per-

* Entire Correspondence between the Congregational Churches, &c., p. 19.

fectly understand that a stone or a beast that hath not, and never had power to discern between good and evil, is not responsible. But when Dr. Wardlaw's distinction, so well urged above, is introduced—and he there predicates that same thing of “sinners”—we can neither understand nor assent to its propriety or truth. It is expressly said of sinners that they have “destroyed,” not perverted their wills merely, but “DESTROYED THEMSELVES,” and in God alone is their HELP found, and yet God holds them responsible for the rejection of every promise, invitation, precept, or threatening which He addresses to them. Their being “destroyed,” alters not the case, because their SIN hath “destroyed” them.

Dr. Wardlaw adds, “We are immediately sensible of this, in the case of *infants* and *idiots*.” This is unquestionably a solemn and affecting subject, and we have no desire to lift the veil from the secret things which belong unto God. At the same time we cannot assent absolutely to this statement. In the first place, we do not know to what extent they can be made conscious either of moral feeling, or of saving impressions. We are not commanded to preach the gospel to infants or idiots, or if we were, we should do it as freely as to dry bones, or dead men, believing that with God all things are possible. We leave them confidently in the hand of God, believing that the Judge of all the earth will do right. But yet if they are in no danger, and in no way accountable, why do we, and why are we bound in duty, and impelled in humanity and natural affection, if we are Christians at all, to pray for them? And why do they suffer the evils of sin even unto death? We believe it is because of sin either more near or re-

mote. It is because they are involved in some way or other in the *guilt* of sin, else they could not be in the misery and suffering of it. We believe if they are to be saved and made perfect in heaven, it must be through the special grace of God, in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But if they are in no way involved in the guilt of sin, and in no way liable for it, it will not be easy to show, either that they are, or need to be saved, through the blood of the Lord Jesus,—a doctrine neither honouring to God nor comforting to man. We are not called to determine anything absolutely in their case. It is not with such we have to do. But there is enough in their case to render it one from which nothing can be concluded for the other side. Moreover, if the doctrine maintained by Dr. Wardlaw be a true one, in reference to existing sinners, we do not see how the fearful consequence can be avoided, that sinners have only to sin with such madness of iniquity, as they often in reality do, as to destroy the powers alike of mind and body, and thus to escape from responsibility altogether. Whereas we say that by such a process, they become only the more awful spectacles of God's avenging justice, both to angels and to men. But we do not see how the case of infants and idiots makes for the argument that the inability is in the *will*, not in the understanding. It makes as much against the seat of the disease being in the will. Are they responsible for having no *will* to do right? Of course Dr. Wardlaw will say, No. Therefore it is no argument in his hands either against inability of understanding, or against perversity of will. In fact it makes the other way altogether. Because, on Dr. Wardlaw's principles, the want of intellectual ability deprives of

responsibility, and the presence of it involves it. It must be held that the discerning faculty must be capable of guilt, and that the whole inability does not lie in the will, unless, indeed, it be asserted that the understanding is the mere passive instrument of receiving impressions, to be dealt with as the imperious ruling will may please to resolve. Indeed the whole that we contend for, is admitted in the next passage. "We are instantly alive," he says, "to the conviction that according as there is less and less of natural capacity and power, there is less and less of responsibility; and *where both cease, responsibility is at an end*; UNLESS IN SO FAR AS THE LOSS OF THE POWER HAS BEEN THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE OPERATION OF MORAL CAUSES."

The clause we have put in capitals guards the whole statement; but overthrows, we apprehend, the Doctor's whole theory, if it be a theory having respect to MAN as he is *now*, and not to MAN as he *was* before the fall. No one, so far as we know, denies that the inability we contend for, is the effect of "moral causes"—but the whole question is, what part of the human constitution is involved in the guilt of sin, and what is this guilt? Is it only the will—and is it only a volition that can be guilty? Or is it the intellect; and a judgment or determination of the understanding also? Dr. Wardlaw says the former. We say the whole; both understanding and will. "Moral causes," by his own admission, can diminish, step by step, and even entirely destroy the "natural capacity and power," and yet not destroy responsibility; and how this admission comports with the very next sentence, we cannot comprehend: "Whatever have been the effects of the entrance

of sin, and the fall of man, the loss of *natural ability* cannot have been one of them." Why so, we ask, if the effects of the entrance of sin be "the consequences of the operation of moral causes?" Dr. Wardlaw does not, we presume, deny that they are. What then forecloses the conclusion that the loss of natural ability *may* be one of them? We believe it not only may, but we think we have proved, it is. A conclusion fairly warranted by one admission by Dr. Wardlaw cannot be foreclosed by the immediately following words, which do nothing more than affirm, but not prove the truth of the whole question in debate. He adds, "for in that case the moment of the entrance of sin would have been the moment of the cessation of accountableness." How so, we again ask, if it were "the consequence of the operation of moral causes?" The mere reiteration of the same sentiment does not strengthen its inherent weakness; and it is not the less a begging of the whole question that the whole passage winds up as follows: "If by sin man had lost the natural power either of knowing truth or of doing duty, then, although the subject of guilt, for the one act by which the power was lost, that one act having been done by him when in possession of the power, he must have ceased to be capable of contracting guilt from that day forward; for there can be no guilt where there is no moral accountableness, and there can be no such accountableness where there is no power." Why so, we must ask again, if the loss of the power be "the consequence of the operation of moral causes?" So far from ceasing to be capable of contracting guilt from that day forward, the true and awful state of the case is, that once a sinner, he is

fallen, we cannot say from grace, but absolutely from holiness, and the faculty which was a faculty for good before he sinned, is still a faculty, (the man is not a beast, but rather a demon,) is still a faculty, capable of contracting nothing but guilt; and a guilt that turns the very grace of God into a cause of aggravated criminality and condemnation.

Is not this in reality the whole theory of human depravity and guilt? He is altogether at enmity with God. His very mind and conscience is defiled. In soul, body, and spirit, he is a servant of Satan; see Rom. iii. 9—20.

With Dr. Wardlaw, we hold it of supreme importance to urge home upon the sinner the source of his personal guilt and personal responsibility, and so far as he demonstrates that the will of the sinner is depraved, and consequently guilty, we cordially agree with him. But what is the practical saving benefit he has in view in urging home this truth upon him? We presume it is not to teach him that he can save himself; but that this guilty perversity, immovable by human power, must, and in the grace of God, may, be removed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Wherein is any one of these practical ends defeated or destroyed, by maintaining that his inability extends to the whole man, intellectual and moral? We affirm it magnifies his real guilt before God, and his consequent danger. It brings out the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and assuredly it shuts the sinner up, not less, but much more completely to entire dependence on the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, to *create HIM* anew, not to create a new disposition or feeling, but to create anew *the whole spiritual man*. Why also does the law enter,

but that the offence might abound, and sin be proved to be exceeding sinful? Why urge the demands of a law to which man, in his natural state, neither is *nor can be subject*, unless it be to shut him up to the faith of Christ? Why is this end not to be served on the sinner under the gospel, to shut him up to the necessity of an absolute dependence, not on an ability he hath not, and hath sinfully lost, but on the ability which God giveth by his Holy Spirit?

The whole question of responsibility then resolves itself into the question, Hath God revealed? Hath God commanded? If he hath, then we know that the Judge of all the earth will do right. To place it on any other ground whatsoever, we believe, is to destroy responsibility altogether. Because it places it in something else than the simple authority of Jehovah; and makes it dependent on the reason, will, or caprice of the sinful creature. A holy creature will ask no more than this authority. God will neither reveal what is untrue, nor command what is unjust, and the first principle of moral duty is to know, feel, acknowledge, and act upon this as an ultimate fact in the nature of God. The whole question to resolve is, Hath God spoken or commanded? And this question must be resolved altogether irrespective of the state or condition of the sinful creature; otherwise God must cease to be the Judge, and man must sit in judgment upon God; and wherever man is found busying himself with testing the nature of God's revelations and trying them by their supposed fitness to his own condition, reason, ability, or ease or comfort, before he will receive them or hold himself responsible for their rejection, he is impiously bringing to his bar the Judge of all the earth. This is in truth the essence of unbelief and rebel-

lion. The opposite of it is faith and obedience. Faith is not contrary to reason when it confides in God, though seas, and mountains, and even the ordinary laws of nature, stand in the way of what God promises and commands. But to satisfy reason, or, in other words, to show reason how God is to fulfil and accomplish, is destructive of faith; and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." The warrant is that God hath revealed and commanded. The sin is the unbelief and disobedience; and the consequent punishment must follow irrespective of man's reason or capacity. That God will not reveal for man's belief, or command for his duty, any thing that God himself, by a divine constitution of his own, irrespective of man's sin and guilt, hath made impossible, is certain. But this is just the thing which must be taken for granted; and is just the very thing that prostrates the sinner before God when he reveals or commands things too hard for him; that when thus utterly "weak" and helpless, then he becomes strong in the Lord. The work is then not man's but God's; that no flesh may glory in his presence. It may be legitimate, useful, and right, to show the sinful creature (for a holy creature needs no such demonstration) that what God reveals and commands is reasonable. But such a demonstration he has no right to claim on the part of God. The very condition of his creature being, precludes it, and renders such a demand an impiety and rebellion. In propounding the gospel offer, in making the gospel call, the minister has his warrant in what God hath said, "Jesus Christ is able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." Every sinner has his warrant in the same,

in the word and character of God, and all-sufficient work of Christ. Nothing more than this is revealed. If he insist that he must see that Christ died for him in particular, the Bible no where declares it, and he arraigns the wisdom and grace of God in demanding such a revelation. If he will not take God's warrant, but must make his acceptance contingent on something in himself, such as that he must fully see, know, and comprehend the whole character, bearing, and relations of the designs and purposes of God and plan of salvation, then is he assuming the attitude of the Judge of the sovereign Jehovah, placing him at his bar; in a word occupying his throne, and must inevitably perish. Any notion of responsibility depending on any thing in the sinful creature is the essence of presumption. The great object not only of the plan of redemption generally, but of each and every part of it, in its origin, agency, and means, is that God be glorified, and have the immediate glory; that HE be ALL and IN all; and this is to be sought in the entire prostration, nay, moral annihilation, so to speak, of the sinful creature, as a prerequisite of the forth putting of the arm of Almighty power and grace to lift him up and save him. On this point there are some very excellent observations by Dr. Candlish in his lately published and very valuable little work on the atonement.

After exposing with great success the utter unsatisfactoriness of the scheme of universal atonement, with limited application; and the necessity of an honest offer of the gospel, not only in respect of those to whom it is offered, but in respect also *to what* is offered, he says:—

“ In regard, again, to the *second* reason which weighs with some who object to any limitation or restriction of

the plan of saving mercy, or, at least, to such limitation and restriction as is implied in the doctrine, that the whole work of Christ was undertaken and accomplished for those actually and ultimately saved, and for them alone—the supposed necessity of satisfying sinners themselves, on this point, with a view to facilitate their acceptance of the gospel call, or to leave them inexcusable in rejecting it—there are some practical considerations which may serve to show the danger of such an experiment. There is one, however, in particular, on which it appears important to enlarge. It is this—that the train of thought, or habit of mind which this objection either indicates or fosters, seems to have an important bearing on the whole question of what it is that makes man accountable, and renders his condemnation just. In fact, it is very apt to derange or vitiate very seriously that most delicate of all the parts of our moral and spiritual frame—the sense or feeling of responsibility; and to countenance the impressions which sinners are prone enough otherwise to take up, that, except upon a certain understanding, and certain conditions fitted to meet their own views, they ought not to be held, and cannot fairly be held, accountable before God at all.

“This impression operates in various forms and degrees among men. In its worst extreme, it becomes the plea of Infidelity itself, leading to a denial of all accountability, properly so called, and all retributive justice or penal judgment. ‘I am so framed, and so situated,’ says the Infidel, ‘that I have no fair chance, or fair play, in this mighty moral warfare, and so cannot fairly be made to answer for the issue. The child of impulse, and, to so large an extent, the creature of circumstances, I have not the liberty or power essential to my contending with any hope of success. If I am to engage in this life-struggle, and peril my all on its issue, give me a better constitution, and more equitable or more favourable terms.’ To this demand of the Infidel, what reply can be given, beyond an appeal to his own consciousness and his own conscience?—his consciousness, as testifying that he sins wilfully—his conscience, as registering, even in spite of all his sophistry, the just sentence of condemnation. The same tendency is seen among many, who, stopping short of ab-

solute infidelity, have, nevertheless, but very vague and inadequate apprehensions of the principles and sanctions of the divine government. They take, as they say, a rational and moderate view of human nature and human life, and look with an indulgent eye, as they allege the great Creator himself must do, on a race of frail and fallible mortals, who could scarcely be expected to be much better than they are, and who may, in all good sense and good feeling, claim a certain measure of forbearance. They regard the sins, and follies, and crimes of men as misfortunes, rather than faults, and look on offenders as deserving rather to be pitied than to be blamed.

“Now, we cannot help thinking that there is something of a similar tendency in the idea which we are combating—the idea, that is, of its being necessary to extend and stretch out the scheme of grace, with a view to satisfy men as to its application to them, and so to deepen their feeling of responsibility in dealing with it. It tends to shift, or transfer, the ground of responsibility too much away from the moral to the intellectual part of our nature. It is true, indeed, that the sense of responsibility must be intelligent as well as conscientious; but all that the understanding is entitled to demand is, that it shall be satisfied on these two points, namely, *first*, That what is duty, in the matter on hand, is clear; and, *secondly*, That it is reasonable; or, in other words, that there is no reason against, but every reason for it. These preliminaries being settled, the understanding inquires no further, but at once hands the affair over to the department of the conscience, and lays the imperative and indispensable obligation upon that supreme and ultimate faculty of our moral nature. And all this is independent of any question of *will*, on the part either of the Being who claims, or of the party who owes, the duty—any question, that is, either regarding the purpose of God’s will, or regarding the power of man’s. Leave the burden of responsibility here, and all is safe. But it is most dangerous to give the slightest countenance to the idea, that any information respecting the purpose of God’s will, or any communication of power to man’s will, is to enter at all as an element or condition into this vital principle, or great fact,

of accountability; or that man is entitled to stipulate, before consenting to hold himself responsible in any matter, that he shall have any knowledge of the intention of God, or any assurance of ability in himself; or anything whatever, in short, beyond the apprehension that this is his duty, and that it is altogether reasonable."

We think the force of this fine passage would have been much increased, and altogether invulnerable, had there been a slight alteration in the sentence, where it is said, "It tends to shift, or transfer, the ground of responsibility too much away from the moral to the intellectual part of our nature." We would say, it shifts the burden of responsibility from the creature over upon the Creator. We apprehend that all that is necessary to constitute responsibility is that God reveals and commands. The creature is not entitled to demand that it be reasonable, or which practically is the same thing, that he be made to see it to be reasonable. In dealing with God this is a fact to be taken for granted; as a fact in all cases, from the very nature of God, it must unquestionably be, and most certainly is. It is not a thing to be settled. It is a thing everlastingly settled; and whenever God reveals and commands, the unbelief or the disobedience is man's sin; and for his sin he must answer. Any difficulty must only throw him the more helplessly on God. This is the essence of the scheme of grace. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the doctrines of grace. It is that which makes them all-important, and in the hand of the Spirit of God, all-efficacious to save. The fact of their efficacy can be historically proved, and in proportion as men recede from them (it is matter of historical fact) are the saving effects of the gospel less and less manifest in the experience and observation of men; and though there may be in the enthusiastic excite-

ment of some of the parties who have adopted the opposite views, an appearance of zeal and piety and religion, even greater than in sounder men, all experience has demonstrated that it is like the morning cloud and early dew that soon vanish away; it has proved like the unnatural excitement of the fever; and has ended in the cold collapse of Arminian and Pelagian moderation, if not, as in many recent exhibitions, both in Scotland and England, in the sensuousness of a self-righteous and superstitious popery.

Thus then have we attempted to discuss, in some of its most important bearings and relations, the great doctrine of Man's Inability to receive the Testimony of God. We have now glanced at its bearing on the confessedly difficult subject of human responsibility. If the views we have endeavoured to illustrate and maintain be sound; they will apply, it is manifest, to the subject of responsibility in resisting the gospel call consistently with the doctrines of election and particular redemption. If there be, as we maintain there are, an entire SUFFICIENCY in the redemption of Christ to save the soul of every sinner, and an entire sincerity in Jehovah in offering it to every sinner willing to receive it; and no prohibition forbidding him to take it, but an invitation to every one that is willing; then unquestionably the inability and unwillingness which spring from man's own guilt, which indeed constitute his guilt, and which God is under no obligation, and has intimated no design, to come forth in a direct purpose and act of Almighty efficacious grace in every case to remove, do not constitute a valid plea of innocence in the guilty sinner, when he rejects the great salvation. And it stands immovably true, and is my

warrant for offering the gospel to every creature, that God hath declared, "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." And never, we believe, has there been, and never shall there be, the real cry of spiritual distress, "Lord, I am neither able nor willing till thou grant the grace; God grant it me," but it hath been and shall be granted. Because in reality it is the cry of God's own Spirit, "helping their infirmities."

CONCLUSION.

WE have often admired the wisdom of the authors of the Westminster Confession of Faith. In nothing does it more strikingly appear than in the unpretending and yet skilful effect with which they provide against the sophistry of Popery and Infidelity. They furnish every Christian who has sufficient intelligence to read the Bible and compare it with the writings of men, with a complete armoury against their assaults in seeking to undermine divine faith and exalt human reason and authority in its stead; when, in furnishing the proofs of a divine revelation, they confine them to those which may be derived from the Bible itself. One of these is that its "scope is to give all glory to God." This is a matter of fact, which any intelligent mind can ascertain for itself. Let the Bible be destroyed and all that has been derived from it, and where shall any other writings be found of which the same thing may be said? Let unbelief declare.

We apprehend the same thing may be said of the great doctrines we have been endeavouring to maintain in these pages. Their "scope is to give all glory

to God." They every where, and throughout, proclaim the solemn lesson, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted." All the works and ways of God, whether of creation, or of providence, or of grace, whether of judgment or of mercy, proclaim, "Be still, and know that I am God." The doctrines which harmonize with this august voice of Divine Majesty must be true. Every creature and every doctrine, every principle and every act that would resist or interfere with it, is and must be rebellious and false. And yet this is the whole matter in dispute between God and corrupt man. "I am JEHOVAH, that is my name, saith God, and my glory will I not give to another." Man will be as God; his language is, "By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent." This presumptuous self-exaltation is the proper characteristic of fallen man. Its impious voice is spoken, in all his maxims, schemes, devices, plans. It is specially loud in this present time. The threatening aspects of providence, and the very judgments which the Lord executes, do not restrain it. God is not recognised. For the prosperity of nations, the government of kingdoms, and the cure of the varied miseries of wretched humanity, human wisdom, skill and energy are deemed amply sufficient. There is an open impatience, and contempt of God, of God's claims and of God's authority. The prevailing language is, We are our own, who is Lord over us?

This spirit is pervading the sentiments of professing churches. Man must be exalted though God should be abased. Man must be free though God's throne should be subverted. "Let us break his bands asunder and cast his cords from us." Yet there can be no doubt that, as is most justly due to God, his whole

manifestations to the creature, and above all to the sinner, must be such as "that no flesh may glory in his presence." But if there be within the mass of fallen humanity, any one element of character, or principle of action, which can be made available to his salvation, prior to, and independent of the forthgoing of almighty power and grace, man must have the glory. It is no more grace, God is not God, man claims a share in his administration; and God is not all and in all. For this reason then are we very earnest to uphold these great truths and principles for which we have been contending; for their obvious "scope is to give all glory to God," and to abase the corrupt sinner, that no flesh may glory in the presence of Jehovah.

2d. But secondly, we believe the reception of them to be as necessary to the salvation of man as to the glory of God. The former of these cannot possibly consist with any thing which is injurious to the latter. God alone WILL be exalted, and not till man be abased before God will God lift him up. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." But not till then. God will not stretch forth the arm of omnipotence to save him who will not give himself the glory. Hence said Chrysostom, "The foundation of our philosophy is humility." "Moreover," said Augustine, "he does not understand what humility is, who, conscious to himself of some power, abstains from pride and boasting," (could he abstain?) "but he who truly feels himself such that he has no refuge but in humility," in casting himself solely upon God. "Let no one," says he again, "flatter himself; Satan is of his own. That from whence he is blessed he has from God only. For what hast

thou of thine own but sin?" When we know and realize our helplessness, then is the Scripture paradox realized, "when I am weak then am I strong;" "most gladly therefore will I glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

3d. These views commend to us the wondrous grace, wisdom, and faithfulness of Jehovah. They exhibit a glorious plan of redemption originating in God the Father, carried on in and by God the Son, applied by God the Holy Spirit; complete and perfect in all and every one of its parts; and certain and secure in every one of its issues, to all and every one of its objects. No imperfection, no uncertainty, no failure. A glorious high throne is the place of our sanctuary. Grace, grace unto it. SALVATION unto our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!

4th. These views teach us that as the grace of God is our hope and security, so the law of Jehovah is our rule; and to the authority of Jehovah must we bow. It is perfect and eternal. The human conscience is as defiled as it is unstable. Let us beware of setting it up as an authoritative rule. It is not a lord but a servant. God is its Lord. Till it bow to Him, it is a slave of the devil. To exalt its power to an independent lordship is to exalt Satan over the soul of God's creature, to invade Jehovah's inalienable eternal claims in the shape of the human conscience; is, in a word, to be guilty of idolatry and atheism. Conscience being not a lord but a servant, it can only act under the authority of its lord. It is not a law to itself. It must obey the law of Jehovah. Not till the law of Jehovah is written upon it, then, in the renewed soul, according to the divine promise to his covenant people, "I will put my law in their minds and write it in

their hearts," can we be safe in following its dictates; and before it can be a fit servant of Jehovah, it must submit to the universal law of his house as the ground on which a sinner in any thing or for any end can approach unto God; "without shedding of blood there is no remission." It must be purged in the blood of sprinkling before it can be the accepted, willing, or happy servant of the Lord of Hosts.

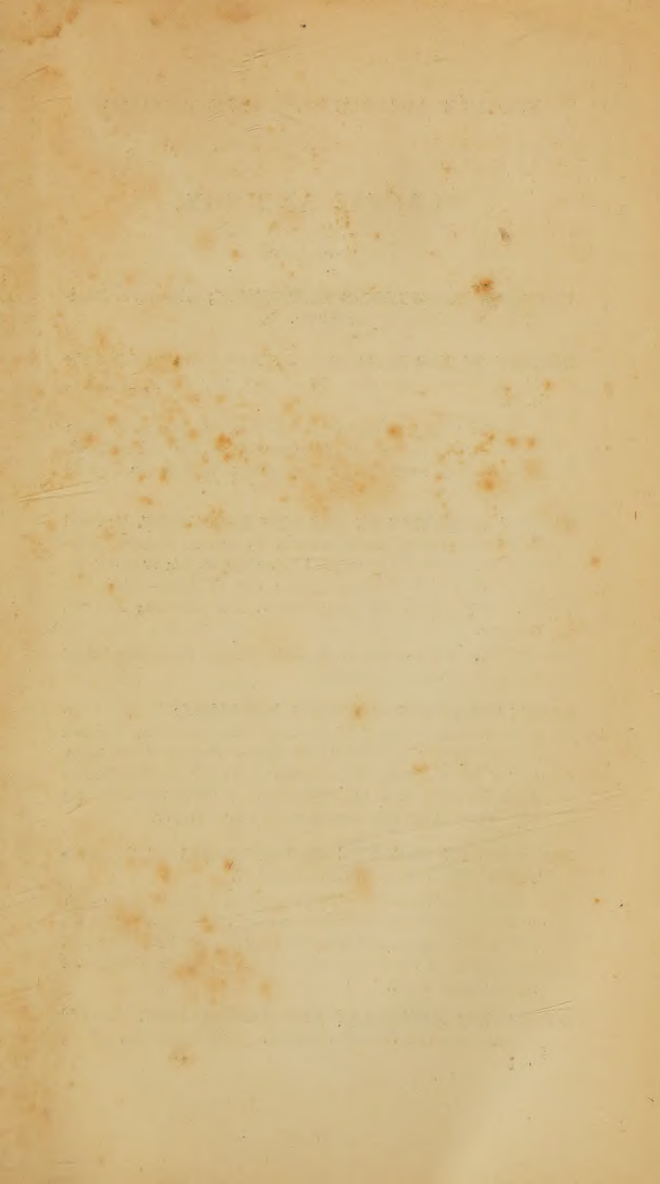
It is the Christian's privilege, and his alone, to have not only a Lord over, but a Physician, to heal the wounded conscience, and restore it to its lawful functions in his own holy service. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." "I will run in the way of thy commandments, for thou hast enlarged my heart." When the conscience is most firmly bound by the direct tie of the revealed law to the throne of God, and most free from the doctrines and commandments of men, it has then the most joyful freedom; and when most free through the cleansing blood and efficacious working of the Spirit of God, it yields him the most willing and faithful allegiance; bows most reverentially before his everlasting throne.

5th. He then who would both serve and enjoy God the Father, must seek union with the Son, through the "inhabitation" of his Holy Spirit, and the belief of the truth. God the Father is the eternal source, God the Son the eternally appointed way, and God the eternal Spirit the efficacious bestower of grace, in the life, pardon, sanctification and everlasting blessed-

ness of the sinner originally dead and condemned; and the word of Jehovah is the title and instrument, setting forth this precious heritage and conveying it in unfailing promise to the heirs of salvation. It is ratified by the blood of Jesus; confirmed to them in his ordinances, and enjoyed in the presence of the Spirit, the earnest of the purchased possession. Here is a ground of security, comfort, peace, life, and holiness to the believer, redounding to the praise of God the Author and Finisher; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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